



---

---

# AN ARTIST PASSES

---

---

ARNDT GIUSTI

---

---



COLL. U. M.  
ART IN FICTION















**AN ARTIST PASSES**





# **AN ARTIST PASSES**

*By*  
**ARNDT GIUSTI**



*New York*  
**DODD, MEAD & COMPANY**  
**1929**

COPYRIGHT, 1929  
BY DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY, INC.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
BY THE VAIL-BALLOU PRESS, INC., BINGHAMTON, N. Y.



# CONTENTS

## Part 1

	PAGE
THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST . . . . .	1

## Part 2

THE ARTIST . . . . .	137
----------------------	-----

## Part 3

THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST . . . . .	169
------------------------------------	-----





Part 1

THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST



## Chapter 1

### I

ON a certain evening in May, Pancho Ortega, having nothing else to do, sat in front of his mother's house smoking a cigarette and idly watching the sunset.

The sky was smeared with streaks of crimson and mauve and vermilion, like a canvas upon which some child was trying out a box of water colours, and yet somehow indescribably beautiful, as though the child had a natural genius for colour and composition. There is no real dusk in the tropics, but there is, just before the swift darkness, an unearthly grey-blue light effect. It is not unlike the *blaue stunde* that a German painter has captured. But it has more warmth and feeling. It makes you think of a lovely naked woman who, lying motionless with closed eyes, awakens in you strange, exotic desires. Again it makes you think of a melody that you have forgotten and try in vain to recall. Invariably, it is

## AN ARTIST PASSES

tinged with sadness. For beauty in the tropics, be it that of a sunset, a brown-eyed girl, or the rich jungle flowers, has too great a poignancy to last; it fades quickly; when the last bright hues have gone from the sky the jungle is changed into an amorphous, threatening mass, the lovely, brown-eyed girl is all too soon a fat old woman, and the flowers die and become part of the decayed vegetation above which the tall palms raise their proud heads.

Pancho Ortega was only a Mexican Indian. And yet, vaguely, he was conscious of the beauty of the sunset, of Lupipa, his mother's cow which he had milked an hour before and which was grazing contentedly in the common field, and of many other things.

He had known for a long time that he was different from his mother and brother and Engracia, his sister-in-law, and Maria, the daughter of the tavern-keeper, whom, when he had enough money, he hoped to marry. In the village people said he was a lazy, young good-for-nothing, but, though he admitted quite honestly he didn't like to work, Pancho thought it must be something else. Had he belonged to a more advanced civili-



## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

zation, he might have said he was an artist, for ever since he was a small boy he had amused himself drawing various things, cows and horses and dogs and the people he knew, sometimes if he disliked them rather uncomplimentarily, on the white adobe walls. In civilized countries little boys and girls, to be sure, do the same, but in a Mexican Indian it was remarkable.

Glancing away from the field where Lupipa was grazing, Pancho, grinning broadly, allowed his eyes to rest on the patio wall, where in black paint there was a not altogether badly executed likeness of that excellent cow.

About a month ago, through his brother's influence, he had been given a job to paint the fence that surrounded the house where lived Don Roy, the manager of the mine that was the main reason for the village of San Cristobal's prosperity. Upon completion of the task he had taken home with him a tinful of paint, much to the annoyance of Felipe, his brother, who worked for Don Roy and was therefore afraid of incurring his displeasure. Felipe, in fact, had insisted on returning the paint with profuse apologies, but Don Roy—neither Pancho nor Felipe could under-

## AN ARTIST PASSES

stand why—had thought it a good joke, had praised Felipe for his honesty, complimented him for having such an artistic brother, and not only allowed Pancho to keep the black paint but also promised to let him have some of the red when next he painted the corrugated iron roof of his house. For a week afterwards Pancho had gone about with pouted chest and a brazen air of superiority. But on Saturday evening, coming home from the tavern, Felipe had beaten him soundly, and since then, though he still felt anyhow mentally superior to his strong-armed brother, Pancho had been careful to show a chastened spirit.

The reason he was grinning now as he regarded the likeness of Lupipa was not that particular picture, but another one that beautified the crumbling wall of an abandoned hut about a mile away from the village. It represented his brother Felipe in a somewhat ignoble attitude. He had not dared to show it to anyone for fear that Felipe would hear of it. But he was certain it was the best thing he had done. He chuckled softly as he tossed away the stub of his cigarette.

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

It was quite dark now, and the light from the earthen stove in the back of the house made the shadows shift eerily across the ground, across the adobe wall where was the likeness of Lupipa. Pancho could hear his mother and Engracia patting the *tortillas* in their hands. He wished that his brother would come home, for he was very hungry. That evening, he decided, he would pay a visit to Maria Lizarraga, his future wife. He would stand leaning against the iron bars of her window and sing to her. She had told him he had a beautiful voice. She also admired his drawings. He liked her because she admired him, also because her father had the tavern. He decided, on second thought, that before going to visit Maria he would look in on old Lizarraga and perhaps he would get a glass or two of tequila for nothing. Lizarraga, like everyone else in the village, thought him a lazy good-for-nothing, but Maria had made it quite plain that she would marry no one else. All that remained now was for him to earn enough money to pay the *padre*. Pancho shrugged his shoulders. He saw no way of getting it, and, cursing old Lizarraga under his breath, he spat disgustedly. Lizarraga could

## AN ARTIST PASSES

well afford to pay for the marriage himself. Pancho had a mind to add a picture of him to the one he had made of Felipe on the wall of the abandoned hut. He grinned and spat again. *Ay de mi!* but it was hard to be poor.

## II

They were all sitting round the pot that contained the evening meal, Felipe, his wife, his mother and Pancho. The house consisted of a single room with a hard earth floor, where the family ate and slept and toileted. Some time ago Don Roy, to reward Felipe for his faithful services, had given him an old discarded oil lamp. It smelt and smoked and gave a fitful, uncertain light, but the Ortegas felt great pride in its possession.

Taking a fresh *tortilla* Pancho bent it into the shape of a shovel and helped himself to more *frijoles*. Like the others, he was listening with interest to what his brother was saying. The following morning Felipe was to accompany Don Roy to the station to meet the train that was bringing Don Roy's sister from Manzanillo.



## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

"She is coming all the way from the *Estados Unidos*," said Felipe.

Pancho knew vaguely that there was such a country as the United States, where all the people were like Don Roy and his wife.

"How far is it from here?" asked Engracia.

Felipe shrugged his shoulders. "I do not know. But it is a very long journey."

Pancho scooped up another mouthful. There was a dreamy, far-away look in his dark eyes. It must be a wonderful place, the *Estados Unidos*.

"What is the lady's name?" he asked.

Felipe shrugged his shoulders again. "Don Roy told me," he said, "but I cannot remember."

"And is the lady married?" asked his mother.

"She is a *señora*, according to Don Roy. But her husband is dead. That is why she is coming to visit the *patrona* and him."

"Is she going to remain here long?"

Felipe shrugged his shoulders a third time. "I do not know, *madre mia*. Perhaps a week, perhaps a month, perhaps a year, perhaps for always. Don Roy, it is easy to see, loves her very much."

## AN ARTIST PASSES

*Cena* was now finished, and leaving the two woman to clear away the leavings Felipe and Pancho went outside. The moon had come up, and with it a gentle breeze that stirred the tattered fronds of the coquite palm towering gauntly above the patio wall. Just above it the False Cross, so named because of its similarity to the real Southern Cross, shone brightly. Lupipa, a black figure in the moonlight, could still be seen grazing. Leaving his brother leaning against the patio wall smoking a cigarette, Pancho, his hands in the pockets of his shapeless white trousers, went off in the direction of the plaza, or rather the tavern which stood *vis-à-vis* from the church.

Here he found a dozen men gossiping and drinking and exchanging jokes with Maria's father who, bare-armed and smiling, stood behind the bar. But at sight of Pancho his smile changed to a frown.

"Well," he demanded gruffly, "what do you want?"

Pancho, nodding to the others, made a friendly gesture, explaining that as he was passing he thought he would look in to wish him "good

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

evening." And also, to take a drink with him.

"First show me your money," said old Lizarraga.

Pancho made a deprecating gesture. For the moment, unfortunately, he was hard up, but if he could have credit for a glass or two of tequila he would surely be able to pay in a couple of days.

"Not another drink," said Lizarraga, crossing his arms on the bar. "You are nothing but a lazy good-for-nothing, as I've told you many times. I simply can't understand what my Maria sees in you."

Pancho sighed and shrugged philosophically. It was plain that he would get no drink out of old Lizarraga that evening. What a pity that Maria had such a he-goat for a father! He had a good mind to tell him what he thought of him.

"I am grieved beyond words at your lack of hospitality," he said, very politely.

Old Lizarraga snorted. "I don't give a *carrajo* whether you are or not!"

"*Buenas noches*," sighed Pancho, and leaving the tavern he went around the corner to where

## AN ARTIST PASSES

he knew Maria was awaiting him at the barred window of her room.

### III

They call it "Taming the Bear" in Mexico, the courtship that takes place on either side of a barred window, a necessary precaution in a land where, like tropical flowers, the girls bloom too soon. In the larger cities where the houses have upper stories the girl lets down a telephone to her lover. This is of course very unsatisfactory, and the village youth who, through the bars, can embrace and kiss his beloved has a distinct advantage.

As he had expected Pancho found Maria waiting for him. She was just sixteen, but already her figure had a graceful fullness, and her eyes, brown and soft, were like the eyes of a deer. She greeted him with a happy laugh, with brown arms that reached out hungrily through the bars, and lips that were soft and warm. She sympathized with him when he had told her how badly her father had treated him. He kissed her again. He was really very fond of her.



## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

Presently the moon peeped around the corner of the thatched roof. From the tavern, where the guests were getting drunk, came a burst of laughter, a shouted curse that lost itself trembling in the night.

"Sing for me, Panchito," murmured Maria.

Soon now, Pancho knew, old Lizarraga would close the tavern for the night, and then he would have to go.

"All right, *nena*," he said, "but I sing so badly."

"You sing beautifully, my heart!"

He shrugged his shoulders, but he was pleased. He liked to sing for Maria. Throwing back his head, he looked dreamily up at the moon, sighed, and softly sang . . .

*"Yo tengo una casita,  
Una casita . . ."*

## *Chapter 2*

### I

IT can be very hot in the low lands of Mexico. Those who have been in both places say it is no hotter in the Amazon basin. The thermometer, in fact, on the day of Anabelle Bronstrop's arrival stood at 112° Fahrenheit. Even Roy Burrell, accustomed as he was to the climate, felt exhausted after the long ride from the station. As for Anabelle, she was more than exhausted. She was half dead, as she herself expressed it, when at last, assisted by Roy and Felipe, she dismounted, or rather let herself drop heavily from the saddle, in front of the house with the corrugated iron roof and the fence that Pancho had painted black. The natives who had gathered, not so much to welcome Anabelle as out of curiosity, raised a thin kind of cheer. It made Anabelle think—she prided herself later that she had thought of the apt simile for all

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

her exhausted condition—of the crowing and cackling of poultry.

“Look,” said Roy, pointing to his wife, a neat little woman in a white wash dress who at that moment came from the house, “there’s Minnie.”

Anabelle nodded feebly. Except for the support of his arm she would have sunk to the ground. All her clothes seemed to stick to her. Her hat sat rakishly on one side of her head, and from beneath it wisps of moist blond hair, too golden blond to be natural, straggled forth untidily. The perspiration had washed away part of her plentiful make-up, and because of this she had rather a ghastly look. She presented altogether a ludicrous appearance. The natives gazed at her with amazement, and Minnie, as she embraced her, could not help smiling.

“You do look hot, dear,” she said.

Anabelle made an unintelligible answer, and between them Roy and Minnie led her into the cool, stone-flagged living-room.

Felipe, meanwhile, unsaddled the horses and turned them loose in the corral. Then he sat down in the shade of a palm to smoke a cigarette. He eyed with displeasure the *peónes* who con-

## AN ARTIST PASSES

tinued to chatter and laugh and gesticulate volubly as they discussed the arrival of the American lady. He quite agreed with them that Doña Anabella—the name wasn't so difficult after all—was rather extraordinary, even for someone who had just come from the United States, but she was Don Roy's sister and therefore to be treated with respect. Nevertheless, he looked forward eagerly to telling his family all about her. But it was time for *comida*, and, having finished his cigarette, he got up and went into the kitchen.

## II

"Now," said Anabelle, "the first thing I must have is a bath."

Minnie exchanged a quick glance with her husband. The table was set for the midday meal and Chata, the barefooted servant girl, had already told her that the *comida*, which had been prepared specially for Anabelle, would be spoilt if not eaten at once. She explained this to her sister-in-law, but Anabelle was quite certain she couldn't eat a mouthful unless she first had a bath. Roy shrugged his shoulders. He had



## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

learned that excellent trick of expression from the people among whom he lived.

"Very well," he said, "but afterwards you'll feel all the hotter."

He exchanged another glance with his wife, who turned quickly to speak to Chata. Five years in Mexico had not spoilt her sense of humour and there was a broad smile on her face.

"Besides," added Roy, "as I've warned you, dear, you'll have to put up with a lot of inconvenience."

He now told Anabelle that the bathroom consisted of a shed about fifty yards from the house where she would stand while Chata threw buckets of water over her. Then, of course, there were the mosquitoes.

"Oh, well," said Anabelle, with a faint laugh that didn't ring quite true, "I'll have luncheon first."

So Minnie spoke again to Chata, telling her that Doña Anabella had changed her mind, and they all sat down at the table.

The meal, which Chata brought in with tears in her eyes, was spoilt, anyhow. The roast and the potatoes were burnt, the sago pudding was

lumpy, and Anabelle didn't care for *frijoles*, the *pièce de résistance* of any Mexican meal.

Afterwards, they sat and talked. Roy smoked his pipe and Anabelle a cigarette, not one of the Mexican ones her brother offered her, but one of those she had brought with her. She positively hated those horrid native things.

"And how did you leave dear Myrtle?" asked Minnie.

Myrtle was Anabelle's daughter who was at the moment in a girls' boarding school in San Francisco. The darling child, Anabelle said, was very well. She had hated the thought of leaving her, but, as she had written them, she simply could not stand it any longer in San Francisco after her dear husband's death. Had she remained there she would have become a total nervous wreck. She sighed wearily. She had nursed her poor, dear husband for three months before, at last, he died. From her voluminous letters they knew already all the details of his sad death, and they listened patiently while Anabelle told them again about the tragedy that had shaken her life and made it possible for her to visit them.

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

"Poor Harry's death came just as I was finishing my last book," she concluded, heaving another sigh and dabbing at her eyes with her handkerchief.

Roy nodded. Anabelle had been writing for years, but as far as he knew, with the exception of a sentimental poem or two, she had never sold anything.

"I hope you brought some of your writing with you, dear," said Minnie kindly. "When one is in such an out of the way place one gets so little to read."

All her things, Anabelle explained, including the novel left unfinished by her husband's death, were in her trunk. The trunk, along with all her numerous other luggage, was being brought on muleback from the station.

"I suppose, dear, you're going to finish the novel here," said Minnie. "It's nice and quiet. You'll have no distractions at all."

Anabelle slowly shook her head, and again she brought out the handkerchief.

"I shall never finish it," she declared. "Every word I wrote would remind me of poor, dear Harry."

## AN ARTIST PASSES

Neither Minnie nor Roy could think of anything to say, and after a few minutes Anabelle added:

"I intend to do a new one—about Mexico."

"Well, you've got a lot of material," said Roy, who was thinking of the mine to which he would have to return shortly. As a rule Minnie and he employed the time they had spent listening to Anabelle in taking their afternoon siesta.

"Are all the natives like the one who came to the station with you?" asked Anabelle.

"You mean Felipe?"

"Yes. He seemed a very nice man."

Roy could not keep from chuckling. "No, my dear, I can't say they are. Felipe is rather an exception. By the way, I must tell you about his brother——" And, with another chuckle, he told her the story of the black paint.

"Why, he's an artist!" cried Anabelle. "How very interesting. When can I meet him?"

"Any time you like. He doesn't do any work. His brother often complains to me about him."

Roy looked at his watch. It was time for him to return to the mine. He got up and put on

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

his Stetson. Before he went out he advised Anabelle to get a bit of rest.

"Yes, do," said Minnie. "It'll freshen you up, dear."

But Anabelle wouldn't hear of it. Life was so short and one had to make the most of every minute. She had made some notes on the train and she intended to sit on the veranda and sort them out. Afterwards, she would do a little writing.

"You've got to get used to having an author about the house," she said.

Minnie tried to argue with her, but finding she couldn't make Anabelle change her mind—it was really too hot to argue—she kissed her affectionately and went upstairs to lie down for an hour herself. Left alone in the living-room, Anabelle lighted a fresh cigarette, took the notes she had made from her pocket, and humming a little tune—it was plain that she no longer thought about her poor, dead husband—went out to the veranda. Throwing herself into a chair, she let the notes rest on her lap and stared dreamily at the cloudless blue sky.

A half-hour later, passing by the veranda,



## AN ARTIST PASSES

Felipe was amazed to see Doña Anabella trying vainly to drive off a cloud of mosquitoes. He could not understand what she was doing there, for mosquitoes, though he himself was not particularly troubled by them, took delight in biting *Americanos*. He wondered whether he should advise her to go inside. But at that moment Doña Anabella, holding a dozen bits of paper in one hand and scratching herself with the other, got up and fled into the living-room.

### III

That evening, over *cena*, Felipe told his wife and mother and brother about Doña Anabella. In the privacy of his home it was no longer necessary to be respectful because she was Don Roy's sister, and every now and then his recital of the day's events was interrupted by a burst of laughter. When he came to Doña Anabella and the mosquitoes Pancho, unable to control himself, exploded in a loud guffaw, spattering Engracia and his mother with a mixture of saliva and *frijoles*.

"You laugh like a pig," said Felipe sourly.

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

Pancho had never seen a pig laugh, but remembering his last beating he did not say so. He was profuse in his apologies. The Mexican Indian, except when he is drunk, is always polite.

"It is nothing," said his mother, wiping her face with the end of her *rebozo*.

Engracia muttered something under her breath and glared at Pancho, but the subject was too interesting to be angry long.

"Is Doña Anabella a young woman?" she asked.

Felipe said he did not know. It was difficult to tell with an American lady. He thought, however, she might be the same age as the *patrona*. He attempted to describe her somewhat in detail. She was neither thin nor fat, she wore beautiful long earrings, she painted her face, her hair was the colour of wet straw, and she spoke very quickly in a high-pitched voice that reminded him of a cackling hen.

Engracia was chiefly interested in the earrings.

"And can she speak Spanish?" asked his mother.

Felipe said she could speak a few words of

## AN ARTIST PASSES

Spanish, whereupon Pancho interrupted to say that he could speak a few words of English. This was quite true. Once when during a revolution there was a shortage of men in the village he had worked for a few weeks at the mine. He had learnt them from Don Roy himself, and though he did not know their meaning he repeated them often with a good deal of satisfaction. He did so now.

"God damn fool!" he said. "Son of a bitch!"

Felipe glared at him. He also did not know the meaning of the words, but he mentioned the Spanish equivalent.

"Now, boys, don't quarrel," said his mother.

She did not mind that Felipe called Pancho the son of the bad woman. When he was a child she had often referred to him when he gave her trouble as "*hijo de quien sabe quien*—child of who knows whom." She did not mean, of course, that she had any doubt as to who his father was, the expression having no more meaning than the "bugaboo man" with whom the children of civilized countries are threatened when they are naughty. But because Pancho was the younger and weaker she wanted to protect him. When

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

Felipe lost his temper they were all rather afraid of him. She remembered the last time he had beaten Pancho and she did not want it to happen again. Getting up, she told Engracia to help her clear away the things.

Felipe lighted a cigarette and went outside to smoke it in the moonlight, where presently Pancho joined him. He wanted to talk some more about Doña Anabella.

"I should like to see her," he said thoughtfully. "Maybe I shall make a drawing of her."

It was an unfortunate remark. Felipe frowned blackly.

"*Carrajo!*" he said. "That's all you think about. All day long you waste your time while I work to support the family. I'm getting tired of it."

"I admit you work hard," answered Pancho sullenly, "but I work also. You just don't understand me, Felipe."

"Oh, I don't! You say you work. Very well, what did you do today?"

Pancho thought for a minute. That morning he had gone to the abandoned hut and had there added to the one of Felipe an excellent drawing

of old Lizarraga. But, of course, he couldn't tell Felipe that.

"I milked the cow," he said.

Felipe gave a shrug of disgust. Pancho really deserved another beating. He started to throw away his cigarette, and then changed his mind. The evening was too warm. Telling Pancho to go to the devil, he sat down on the ground and rested his back against the patio wall.

Pancho sighed with relief. He sauntered away, wondering what he should do. He knew it was useless to try again to get a drink out of old Lizarraga. Nor, for some reason, did he feel like spending the evening with Maria. He reflected with a grin that it would be very pleasant to do as Felipe had advised him, but without money you couldn't even go to the devil. Wandering into the near-by field, he threw himself on the grass and lay there gazing up at the myriad stars. The night was beautifully clear and presently his dark Indian eyes rested on Venus, but he did not know at this time that it was the star of love. He liked to look at it simply because it shone so brightly.

His thoughts returned to Doña Anabella. Her



## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

hair, Felipe had said, was the colour of wet straw, and she wore long earrings and spoke like a cackling hen. What a beautiful drawing she would make! He could not get her out of his mind.

### *Chapter 3*

#### I

IN all villages in Mexico, indeed this is so throughout Latin America, the business of the day—there is never very much of it—is at a standstill from about eleven o'clock in the morning until the latter part of the afternoon.

It is a lazy, comfortable life, but of course you must have the right temperament for it. It does not do, for instance, for that glorified person of modern civilization, the “go-getter.” He finds it impossible to lie in the shade of wall or tree, languidly smoking innumerable cigarettes, or, as though even that were too much effort, merely drowsing away the hours. He does not feel, when with the cool afternoon breeze he again bestirs himself, that he has had a satisfying, worthwhile day. He would, if compelled to live this sort of life indefinitely, either go mad or, as at the finish of a number of excellent vaudeville jokes, take a revolver and shoot himself.

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

Anabelle Bronstrop wasn't exactly a "go-getter," for she wrote sentimental novels, and just loved old churches and picturesque peasants with their quaint, funny ways. But she did think that to take a siesta after luncheon was a slovenly habit—this despite the fact that the mosquitoes had bitten her rather badly when she sat on the veranda the previous afternoon—and, waiting until Roy and Minnie had gone upstairs to lie down in their room, she put on her hat and went outside to find Felipe. He was dozing near-by at the foot of a palm and he roused himself with a start. He looked around him to see who had called his name, and seeing that it was Doña Anabella he got politely to his feet. He thought it rather inconsiderate of her to have disturbed him and he wondered vaguely what she could want him for. After a time she succeeded in making him understand that she wanted him to saddle a horse for her. He stared at her incredulously.

"Does Doña Anabella mean that she wants to take a ride?"

She did not understand the first time, and so, very slowly, he repeated his question. She nodded

impatiently. Felipe was a nice man, but she thought he was rather stupid.

"It is very hot," said Felipe.

Again she did not understand, and he repeated his words, accompanying them with elaborate gestures. Was Doña Anabella quite certain she wanted to take a ride? Anabelle was beginning to get impatient.

"Do as I tell you," she said.

Felipe wasn't such a nice man, after all. He was, in fact, almost impertinent. Seeing that Doña Anabella really meant what she said, Felipe shrugged his shoulders resignedly. He was quite convinced now that she was crazy, but since she desired it he would go and saddle a horse for her.

Presently he returned, helped Doña Anabella to mount, and then, resuming his place in the shade of the palm, sat watching her pass at a snail's pace along the sun-parched road. In vain she tried to make the horse trot. Felipe, his head nodding, gave a grunt of satisfaction. It was a very old, tame animal, accustomed to hard usage, and he was certain that it would do nothing to cause Doña Anabella to fall off. Certainly, it

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

would not go very fast. But it was hot and he was tired. He dismissed Doña Anabella and the horse from his mind, and in five minutes was asleep.

### II

Arriving in the village of San Cristobal, the first thing Anabelle did was to make her way to the plaza. Here, named in the order of their importance, were the tavern, the church, and the house of the *jefe*, or chief of police. The church was some hundreds of years old, and, because she always admired old churches and picturesque peasants, Anabelle thought it was quaint and beautiful. In point of fact, it wasn't. Village churches in Mexico seldom are. A fat black pig lay grunting in the open gate giving on the patio of the rectory, and it eyed Anabelle curiously. Except for the pig and old Lizarraga, who was dozing on a stool in front of his tavern, there was no living thing in sight. Leaning from her saddle, Anabelle spoke to the tavern-keeper.

"Can you tell me in what year the church was built?" she asked.

Lizarraga lifted his head, wondering for a



## AN ARTIST PASSES

moment who the lady could be, and then, realizing she must be the sister of Don Roy Burrill, inquired amiably as to how he could serve her.

"I want to know how old the church is," said Anabelle.

Lizarraga scratched his head. Could it be that the lady wanted something to drink?

"No, no, no," said Anabelle. "The church, see——" She pointed to it. "Is it very old?"

Lizarraga smiled with satisfaction. He understood her at last. Yes, that was the church. His daughter, Maria, went to church every day. She was very religious. She was also very beautiful and a good daughter. At the moment she was taking her siesta, otherwise he would call her out so the lady could see for herself that he spoke the truth. Was she sure that he couldn't bring her out something to drink?

"No, no," said Anabelle. "Thank you very much."

"It is nothing," replied Lizarraga courteously. He regretted, however, that the lady wasn't thirsty. He expressed the hope that some other time, when she was, she would favour his tavern by taking a drink there.

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

Suddenly Anabelle remembered the story Roy had told her about Felipe's brother and the paint.

"I believe," she said, "that you have a young artist in the village."

Lizarraga shrugged his shoulders. The lady might be right, but if there was such a person in San Cristobal he had not heard of him.

"That's strange," said Anabelle. "His name is Pancho Ortega. His brother Felipe works for Don Roy Burrill."

Lizarraga frowned. He assured the lady that he knew Pancho Ortega very well, but he had not heard that he was an artist. Was the lady sure that she didn't mean someone else?

"No, that's the one. Pancho Ortega. Can you tell me where he lives?"

Lizarraga said he could. If the lady would turn to the right at the *jefe's* house—he pointed it out to her—and proceed thence to the end of the street she could not help but find it. The house, he added, was white—the walls of the tavern were tinted blue—and it had a patio with a palm in it. If the lady would look he thought it likely that she could see the palm now. Anabelle looked and saw it.

### AN ARTIST PASSES

"I'm much obliged to you," she said.

"It is nothing," replied the tavern-keeper. But was the lady quite, quite certain that she meant Pancho Ortega and not someone else?

"Oh, yes," said Anabelle.

Old Lizarraga shrugged, mentioned the fact that it was very hot, and sank down again on the stool.

Anabelle urged the old horse forward, kicking it in the side with the heel of her riding-boot. She had to kick several times before it finally began to move. Turning in the saddle she waved her hand to the tavern-keeper.

"*Adiós!*" she cried.

It was a beautiful word, that. She kicked the horse again to make it turn the corner at the *jefe's* house.

### III

Pancho was stretched out in the shade of the patio wall. He had no cigarettes left, otherwise he would have been smoking. All at once he noticed a lady on horseback approaching from the direction of the plaza. He was very much

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

surprised and he raised himself to a sitting position. Who could the lady be but Doña Anabella? He was so interested that, as Anabelle came nearer, he actually scrambled to his feet. She had already seen him and, bringing the horse to a stop, she called him over to her.

"Can you tell me," she asked, "if this is the house of Felipe Ortega?"

He told her it was, and he added that he was Pancho Ortega, Felipe's brother.

Anabelle gave a little cry of pleasure, which added to Pancho's surprise. She explained that she was the sister of Don Roy Burrill. If Pancho would hold the reins, she would like to dismount. He did so and she descended heavily from the saddle.

"My brother," said Pancho, "is unfortunately not at home, and my mother and sister-in-law are asleep. If Doña Anabella desires it, I shall go inside and wake them."

"No, no," said Anabelle. "It's you I've come to speak to."

Pancho was more surprised than ever. He grinned from ear to ear. It was the grin of the village yokel—who is really the same the world

## AN ARTIST PASSES

over—but Anabelle thought it charming and boyish.

“I speak some English,” he said.

Anabelle was delighted. Pancho grinned again, as he recited his knowledge of the English language, “God damn fool! Son of a bitch!”

Anabelle was disconcerted. She didn’t know what to say. Pancho offered a little further information.

“I also know how to draw pictures.”

“How lovely,” said Anabelle, relieved. “Won’t you show them to me?”

Pancho was quite willing to do so. He pointed to the white patio wall.

“That,” he said, “is a picture of Lupipa, my mother’s cow.”

Anabelle regarded the picture critically. It was scarcely what she had expected to find, but it certainly looked like a cow.

“Does Doña Anabella like it?”

“Yes, I think it is beautiful.”

“I have many more. If Doña Anabella would care to walk about the village with me——”

Anabelle gave a little gasp. No, she was sorry but she didn’t have the time just now. Another



## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

day, perhaps. It was really dreadfully hot. She realized this for the first time. She still thought that the afternoon siesta was a slovenly habit, but she decided not to go riding again in the heat of the day.

"Since Doña Anabella liked the picture of Lupipa," said Pancho, "will she perhaps give me a little money with which to buy cigarettes?"

"Why, certainly," said Anabelle, "I shall be glad to."

She gave him a peso, which was more than Pancho had expected. He thanked her profusely as he helped her back into the saddle. He was so very polite that Anabelle forgave him his forwardness. She smiled down from the saddle.

"*Adiós*," she said, "thank you for showing me the picture."

"It is nothing," replied Pancho, and suddenly, as the horse began reluctantly to move, he had an inspiration.

"*Adiós!*" he cried, at the top of his voice. "God damn fool! Son of a bitch!"

## *Chapter 4*

### I

"A CHARMING, ingenuous boy," said Anabelle when she told Roy and Minnie of her meeting with Pancho. "And so polite. I simply can't understand why he has such a bad reputation."

Roy had been quite angry when he had learnt from Felipe that, instead of reading downstairs in the living-room as she had told them she intended to do, she had gone off by herself for a ride. So now, instead of being interested in Pancho's charming qualities, he replied irritably:

"I know all about him. I had him at the mine once. He's a damned young fool." He was inclined to tell Anabelle that she was a damned fool also, but he thought better of it. "Mind, now," he added, "you're never to do such a thing again. You're not acclimatized yet and you might have got sunstroke. Besides, it's not safe for a woman to go riding by herself in Mexico. You never can tell what may happen."

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

"Roy is quite right," said Minnie. "When you've been here as long as I have, dear, I know you'll agree with us."

Anabelle thought they were both making a mountain out of a molehill. She was quite certain from what she had seen of San Cristobal that it was far safer for a woman than San Francisco, California, U.S.A.

"As for that boy Pancho," she added. "I don't care what anybody says. I like him."

Roy, refilling his pipe, made no answer this time. It was a waste of words to argue with Anabelle. But Anabelle was not finished with the conversation.

"I'm convinced he has talent," she said stubbornly.

"Are you never going to stop talking about that wretched fellow?" demanded Roy.

"Do let Anabelle talk," said Minnie, smiling. "After all, if she's taken an interest in him—there's no harm in it, dear."

So Anabelle continued. She told them of the drawing Pancho had made of his mother's cow. His work, she said, appealed to her because it had a certain crude force. They must remember

that he was only a Mexican Indian. He had had no advantages. After all, one had no right to expect the impossible.

"Oh, all right," said Roy wearily. "Have it your way. He's a genius, if you say so. Only I don't give a damn."

Anabelle was satisfied. She did not herself believe all she had said about Pancho. Certainly, he was no genius. She even doubted that he had any great talent: she had said that only to annoy Roy. But she did like him. She was, in fact, at the age when she liked all young men.

At that moment Felipe looked in at the door to ask if Don Roy needed him still or if he could go home. Roy told him he could go, and suddenly he had an idea. Telling Felipe to wait a minute, he turned to Anabelle and said:

"Look here, if you're going to go riding about the place you can't go by yourself, as I've told you. I'm too busy at the mine to go with you and I need Felipe here. So, if you want me to, I'll tell him to send that fool brother of his around tomorrow. He can go with you and show you whatever you want to see. I dare say he's got enough brains for that."

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

Anabelle was delighted.

"All right, then," said Roy.

Felipe was also pleased. He quite shared Don Roy's opinion of his brother, but the money Pancho would earn—Don Roy offered to pay him fifty centavos a day—would be most welcome. He arranged with Don Roy to have Pancho's wages added to his own.

Pancho, when Felipe came home and told him the good news, did not like the financial arrangement at all. But, remembering his last beating at Felipe's hands, he said nothing. Besides, he had an idea that it would be very pleasant to work for Doña Anabella.

So it was settled, and, with what remained of Doña Anabella's peso in his pocket, Pancho went off to the tavern.

## II

Pancho soon discovered that his duties were not arduous. Had they been he would doubtless not have fulfilled them satisfactorily. Anabelle never got up very early, and so, coming to work at about eight o'clock, he usually started the day

## AN ARTIST PASSES

gossiping for a couple of hours with the servants or lounging about the patio smoking cigarettes. Doña Anabella, as he had surmised, was generous; and despite the fact that his wages, since they were paid to Felipe and not to himself, went toward the household expenses he always had plenty of money, not only for cigarettes but also for drinks in the tavern. He went there every evening now and sometimes he forgot all about Maria waiting for him at the barred window of her room.

Now that he was working steadily, old Lizaraga was beginning to change his opinion of him. He frequently spoke to him about Maria, and on one occasion—Doña Anabella had been particularly generous that day and Pancho insisted on buying drinks for the house—he even went so far as to clap Pancho on the back and refer to him as his prospective son-in-law. At the time Pancho had grinned with satisfaction, but the following morning, turning the matter over in his mind as he was waiting for Doña Anabella, he admitted to himself that he no longer looked forward as he used to do to the day when he would marry Maria. After leaving the tavern the pre-



## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

vious evening, he had gone to see her and, instead of being pleased, as she ought to have been, she had quarrelled with him because he had remained away for two evenings before. She really had a sharp tongue. He no longer even enjoyed singing for her. He wondered what had brought about this change in him. But just then he heard Doña Anabella calling to him, and dismissing Maria from his mind he went to fetch the horses.

He found Doña Anabella standing by the veranda speaking with her sister-in-law.

"Oh, there you are," she cried gaily.

She was very different from the *patrona*, of whom Pancho was rather afraid. Anabelle did not agree with Minnie that you couldn't treat a native nicely without being taken advantage of.

"After all, they're human beings," she said, "and I'm sure they appreciate it." To which Minnie answered, as she always did when Anabelle spoke about the country or the natives, "When you've been here as long as I have, dear, you'll know better."

The doctor had forbidden Minnie to ride more than was necessary—the journey from the station, for instance, could be made only on mule-

## AN ARTIST PASSES

back—but she agreed with Anabelle that it was good exercise. So Anabelle went for a ride every day.

After the novelty had worn off, she did not greatly enjoy it. The jungle trails were rather monotonous and in the sun it was too hot. But she found it more monotonous still to sit in the house and talk with Minnie, whom she thought a dear but stupid. And, somehow, she could not get into the mood to write. She enjoyed, however, playing the Lady Bountiful to Pancho. He had shown her several more of his drawings on the walls of the village, but they weren't quite so good as the one of Lupipa. She was coming, in fact, to the conclusion that Roy was right. Pancho was a nice boy, but he didn't seem to have any real talent.

That morning the sky was cloudy, and as Pancho helped Anabelle into the saddle Minnie expressed the hope that it wouldn't rain.

"It'll be a change from the sunshine," said Anabelle. "I shan't mind it at all."

"I'm afraid you don't know what a tropical rain is, dear. When you've been here as long as I have——"

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

"Don't worry, darling. I'll be all right."

And, waving her hand to Minnie, Anabelle kicked her horse into motion and Pancho and she started along the dusty road.

### III

An hour and a half later, while they were following one of the trails, the storm broke. Because of the foliage overhead they were somewhat protected from its violence, but the wind that had come with the storm, lashing the palms and the strange trees festooned with a network of creepers and lianas until the jungle was a writhing green mass, made Anabelle feel very uncomfortable. It was all so creepy and vaguely terrifying. She wondered how long the storm would last. When she asked Pancho he shrugged his shoulders.

"Maybe an hour," he said. "Maybe all day. I have known it to last even longer than that."

He seemed so unconcerned that Anabelle was rather cross with him.

"Well, I want to get out of here," she told him.

## AN ARTIST PASSES

"In the open Doña Anabella will get very wet."

"I don't care. Turn around now and do as I tell you."

Pancho shrugged his shoulders again. He would do exactly as Doña Anabella desired. They had only to return along this very same trail in the direction from which they had come.

"All right," said Anabelle impatiently. "You lead the way and I'll follow."

Pancho was quite right, as Anabelle discovered when they came into the open. Here the storm struck at them from all sides. The torrential rain made it impossible to see where they were going and the wind was so strong that she was afraid it would tear her from the saddle. She was wet and chilled to the bone.

"Oh, dear," she said, "this won't do at all, Pancho."

But, because of the wind and the rain, Pancho didn't hear her. She had a sudden fear that she would be separated from him. She nearly fainted at the thought, for Anabelle Bronstrop was not a very courageous woman. Kicking her horse violently with both feet, she caught up with him.

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

"We've got to take shelter somewhere, Pancho."

Pancho, shrugging his shoulders philosophically, regarded the rain, as though searching in that pitiless downpour the shelter Doña Anabella desired. And, all at once, Anabelle pointed excitedly to their right.

"Is that a house?" she demanded.

Pancho looked and nodded. Yes, that was a house. Doña Anabella was quite right.

"Don't be so stupid," she cried. "Surely we can get shelter there."

Pancho was certain they could. He knew that house very well indeed. It was, in fact, the abandoned place where he had drawn those excellent pictures of old Lizarraga and Felipe. But because of the storm it was impossible to tell Doña Anabella about them now. Calling to her to follow, he led the way.

## IV

Anabelle noticed the pictures the moment she entered. They were done in bold black paint on the cracked adobe wall. The one represented

Felipe and his wife, the other old Lizarraga, also with a lady whom Pancho, who unlike Maria was not at all religious, had modelled after the *padre's* sister. Anabelle did not recognize the figures, but the subject matter was quite plain to her. Like nearly all men, primitive or otherwise, Felipe and Lizarraga prided themselves on their masculine virility, and this in the pictures Pancho belied. They were really dreadfully vulgar and indecent. Anabelle's face, red and wet from exposure to the rain and wind, became redder still. She was very much embarrassed. She was also very angry with Pancho. She had left him outside with the horses, and now she heard him come in and close the door. She was glad that her back was turned to him.

"Does Doña Anabella like the pictures?"

Anabelle did not answer. She wondered if he would notice her flushed face. She was furious but she reminded herself that he was only a Mexican Indian. After all, what could you expect?

"They are the best things I have done," continued Pancho. "But I have shown them to no one for fear that my brother would hear of them.



## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

He does not appreciate my work and he would beat me."

Anabelle was quite certain of that, and she could not help thinking that Pancho deserved a thrashing. Grinning broadly, he started to explain the pictures to her somewhat in detail, but this was too much.

"How dare you!" she cried.

Pancho did not understand her and he politely said so. Anabelle repeated her words and she stamped her foot with such violence that the water ran from her wet clothing making a little puddle at her feet. He saw now that she was angry, and he dropped his eyes and shuffled his feet, as though he had suddenly stepped on something very hot. He did not know why Doña Anabella was angry, but he muttered a thousand apologies. His manner was sheepish and contrite. Anabelle, who was recovering rapidly from her embarrassment, reminded herself again that he was only a Mexican Indian.

"You're a bad, bad boy," she said, shaking her finger at him.

Pancho could tell from the sound of her voice that he was forgiven.

## AN ARTIST PASSES

"I am sorry," he said "that Doña Anabella does not like the pictures."

"I don't care to discuss that with you," said Anabelle sharply. "Are you quite sure the horses are all right?"

Pancho said he was. At that moment there was a thunder crash and the lightning, flashing across the window, made the pictures on the wall stand out even more boldly. Anabelle gave a little cry of distress.

"Oh, dear," she said plaintively, very near the point of tears, "what are we going to do?"

Pancho, anxious to return into her good graces, mentioned politely the possibility that they would have to remain there for the rest of the afternoon.

"But I'll be bored to death. Are you sure the rain hasn't let up a little?"

Pancho opened the door to see and was met by a rush of water that splashed him from head to foot and reached even Anabelle who was standing in the middle of the room.

"No," he said, as he closed the door again, "as Doña Anabella sees it is still raining." Then, suddenly, he had an inspiration. "Since Doña

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

Anabella has nothing else to do," he added, "perhaps she will let me make a picture of her. I have not dared to ask, but I have wanted to ever since she came to San Cristobal."

On another occasion such a request would have pleased Anabelle very much, but now the thought of a picture of herself being added to the two already on the wall made her shudder.

"No, no," she said quickly. "I'm not in the mood, Pancho. Some other time, perhaps."

Pancho expressed his regret. He took a cigarette from the pocket of his trousers, found it wasn't too wet, and finding also a dry match settled down to smoke and wait patiently for the rain to stop.

Very wet and miserable, Anabelle settled down also, sitting gingerly on the edge of an old broken chair. Despite the effort she made not to, she found herself looking again at the pictures on the wall. For the third time she reminded herself that Pancho was only a Mexican Indian. It was useless to try to make him understand that the pictures were vulgar and indecent. She realized that.

## AN ARTIST PASSES

So for two long hours they sat there, and then at last the rain stopped, as suddenly as it had started, and Pancho and she went outside. He knew that she was still displeased with him, and he had begun to suspect that her displeasure had something to do with the pictures. But why this should be so he did not know, nor did he dare to ask. They rode in silence all the way home, and when he helped Doña Anabella to dismount Pancho averted his eyes and felt very uncomfortable.

"I shall not want you any more today," she said.

Then, to his amazement, she took out her purse and gave him two pesos. So, as he walked through the mud in the direction of the village, Pancho decided that he must have been mistaken. Doña Anabella must have liked his pictures after all.

## V

Anabelle's clothes had dried on her, but she was cold and stiff. Minnie was quite certain she

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

would be ill. A thorough wetting such as she had had usually meant an attack of fever.

"Roy and I were dreadfully worried about you," she said. "Now you come right upstairs, dear, and change every stitch you've got on."

Anabelle did as she was told. She had had nothing to eat since breakfast, but she wasn't at all hungry. She really didn't feel well. Minnie gave her a drink of whisky and made her swallow some quinine. She also told Chata to tell the cook to heat water for a bath, and presently Anabelle stood shivering in the shed that served as bathroom while Chata threw bucketsful of water over her. Afterwards she had something to eat, and then, for the first time since her arrival in San Cristobal, she lay down for a siesta.

But she wasn't ill after all.

"There," she told Roy triumphantly, as they were all sitting in the living-room after dinner that evening, "you'll have to admit now that I'm acclimatized. I never felt better in my life."

She now told about the abandoned hut where Pancho and she had taken shelter from the storm.

## AN ARTIST PASSES

Naturally, she said nothing about the pictures on the wall. But she thought of them now without embarrassment, with amusement even. They were very vulgar and indecent, of course, but they were rather clever. She was a little angry with herself for having acted so stupidly about them. Like most lady writers in these modern days, she had a horror of anything prudish. Perhaps, she reflected, Pancho really had a certain talent. And she said:

"Pancho wanted to make a picture of me to-day."

"There in the hut?" asked Minnie.

"Yes. But I was too cold and miserable."

"I believe that," said Roy, who, relieved that she was none the worse for it, could not help chuckling as he visualized her predicament.

"The poor boy," added Anabelle, "had only some of that old black paint you gave him."

And suddenly she had an idea. Couldn't Roy, when next he got some things from Colima, have a box of paints sent with them? Minnie was sure he could.

"You're a dear," said Anabelle.

Roy grunted something under his breath.



## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

“All right,” he said, “if you want me to. But I think it’s all tommyrot.”

And, refilling his pipe, he went over to his desk where he sat frowning to himself as he worked out some problem that had come up at the mine.

## *Chapter 5*

### I

THE box of paints had arrived along with several large sheets of drawing paper, and Anabelle, in her rôle of Lady Bountiful, looked forward to giving them to Pancho the following morning. It had not been so simple a matter to obtain them as she had imagined, and Roy, declaring more emphatically than ever that it was all tommyrot, had had to send to Guadalajara for them.

"I simply can't understand her interest in this fellow," he told Minnie, when Anabelle, who wanted to be up early next morning, had gone upstairs to bed.

But Minnie only smiled tolerantly and answered:

"What's the difference, dear, if it makes her happy?"

Which may or may not prove that Anabelle was right in her belief that Minnie was a dear

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

but stupid. Certainly, Anabelle was happy. In her bedroom she looked at the paints again, and she thought of Pancho's big brown eyes opening wide with amazement and delight. She was really rather like a child who has just been given a new playtoy.

The following morning, when he arrived fully expecting to while away a couple of hours waiting for Doña Anabella, Pancho was very much surprised to find her ready. She was sitting alone on the veranda and she called to him to come to her.

"I've a surprise for you," she said.

He wondered what it was. He could see that she was not dressed to go riding, and, though he had not heard of it, he had a sudden fear that she might be leaving San Cristobal. Anabelle had been holding the box of paints behind her back and now she brought it forth and handed it to him.

"See what's inside, Pancho."

He did so, and as she had expected his big brown Indian eyes widened with amazement. He had never in his life seen a box of paints, and he enquired what it was for.

## AN ARTIST PASSES

"A little present for you, silly boy," said Anabelle.

Pancho could hardly believe his ears.

"So that you can paint that picture of me," she added, laughing.

Pancho understood at last. He was beside himself with gratitude. He assured Doña Anabella that if she desired it he would give his life for her.

Anabelle wished that Minnie were there to hear this. It proved conclusively what she had always maintained, that even a Mexican Indian appreciated what you did for him.

"Silly boy," she said, "I don't want your life. I just want you to paint a very nice picture of me."

Pancho was eager to do that. When, he asked politely, did Doña Anabella want him to paint her?

"Now, if you like," she said.

He was delighted, but, having never before seen a box of paints nor used such a sheet of beautiful white paper, he did not know how to begin and he stood scratching his head. Greatly amused, Anabelle told him how to go about it.

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

She found it rather difficult to make him understand, but at last, leaning back with a sigh,—though it was not yet nine o'clock it was already unpleasantly warm on the veranda,—she watched as he knelt on the ground, a sheet of paper stretched out in front of him, and endeavoured to make a preliminary sketch of her, which, she had told him, he must do before starting with the paints. He felt very self-conscious and ill-at-ease, and every few minutes he looked up to ask whether she was pleased.

They were no longer alone. A crowd of curious *peónes* had gathered, and standing near-by they chattered and gesticulated excitedly. Pancho rather enjoyed their presence, but Anabelle found it very annoying to have herself thus stared at and chattered about in a language that she couldn't understand very well. Presently Minnie came out to see what was happening.

"No, darling," cried Anabelle, "you can't see the painting until it's finished."

Minnie explained that she hadn't come out because of that, but because she was certain it was too hot to sit on the veranda. Anabelle was

## AN ARTIST PASSES

perspiring and she felt very hot indeed, but she answered lightly:

“No, darling. It isn’t hot at all.”

So, smiling in her kind, tolerant way, Minnie returned to the living-room.

For another hour Anabelle continued to sit there. The sun rose in the heavens and she became hotter and hotter. Pancho had now begun with the paints, but the mess he made with them was quite unrecognizable. It was just such a mess as a child might have made if given a box of paints to play with. At last, unable to stand it any longer, she got up and said:

“That’s enough for today, Pancho. I’ll go in and change and then we’ll go for a ride.”

Pancho shrugged his shoulders. He was reluctant to leave his work in which he was very much interested, but of course if Doña Anabella desired it he would do so. Though it certainly bore no resemblance to her, he was very proud of the mess he had made, and when Doña Anabella had gone into the house he showed it to the crowd of *peónes*.

“It is not yet finished,” he explained, “but it is going to be a beautiful picture.”



## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

They had never seen a beautiful picture and so they did not doubt his word. They were all envious of him, and barefooted Chata looked at him in a way that made it plain she would receive graciously any amorous advance he might feel inclined to make. She was a very attractive girl, better-looking in a way than Maria, but, though tempted for a moment, Pancho dismissed the idea from his mind. One of the men offered him a cigarette, and as he smoked it he continued to speak about the picture, explaining in detail what it would be like when it was finished. His manner, supercilious and rather annoying, was that of most artists when they discuss their work with a layman. He was really quite drunk with a sense of his own importance. But Doña Anabella's room was above the veranda, and he heard her calling to him from her window to saddle the horses.

He put away the box of paints and the paper very carefully in a corner of the veranda, warned everyone within earshot that he would stick his knife into the person who so much as touched them, and then went off whistling to the corral. The tune he whistled was *La Cucaracha*—

## AN ARTIST PASSES

translated it means "the cockroach"—which was the favourite of his great namesake Pancho Villa.

In the corral, nibbling at a luscious green bush, he found the red mare that he liked to ride and beside it the very old tame horse that, since he was responsible for her safety, he always saddled for Doña Anabella. Like all primitive people, he was at ease with animals, though frequently he treated them brutally. So now, forcing the bit into the red mare's mouth, he spoke again of the picture. His voice was soft and caressing, and the red mare looked at him with surprise. But the Mexican bit is very uncomfortable, even when a horse has become accustomed to it, and as the mare jerked away her head Pancho cried viciously:

"*Carrajo!* Hold still or I'll beat the life out of you."

## II

As they were riding along side by side, Pancho said:

"Tomorrow morning I shall finish the picture,

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

and then, with Doña Anabella's permission, I shall start on a new one."

Anabella said nothing. She was really disappointed in Pancho. She did not know exactly what she had expected, but certainly not such a mess as he had made. Besides, the heat on the veranda had given her a headache.

"I should, in fact, like to paint Doña Anabella every morning," continued Pancho.

Had he not been a young man with big expressive brown eyes, Anabelle would certainly have told him that she felt convinced he had no talent and that he ought to give up the idea of becoming an artist. But instead, looking at his eager, pleased face, she answered:

"No, Pancho. I can't stand sitting there and being stared at by all that crowd."

It had not occurred to him that Doña Anabella would mind that. His face fell, and then an idea came to him. He was always having ideas. He felt that he was really a very clever fellow.

"If that is all, Doña Anabella and I need only go some place where there will be no one to disturb us."

"Where, for instance, Pancho?"

## AN ARTIST PASSES

He thought for a minute, scratching his head. It was not so easy to think of a quiet place where you would be undisturbed. But suddenly he gave an exclamation of satisfaction. Of course, that was exactly what they wanted. Did Doña Anabella remember the abandoned house where they took shelter during the storm? Anabelle remembered it very well, and she was angry with herself because she felt herself flushing.

"Is that not perfect?" demanded Pancho happily.

Anabelle came to a sudden decision. She had an idea that it would be useless, but she would try to make Pancho understand why it was that she could not go again to that place. He listened to her patiently, a puzzled, rather sullen look on his face. He could understand only about a fourth of what she was saying, but it was enough to make him realize that she had not liked the pictures of Felipe and old Lizarraga after all.

"You understand now why I can't go there again, don't you?" asked Anabelle. "I'm not angry with you, because you're only an Indian boy and you can't be expected to understand.

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

But I'm a lady and I want you always to respect me as such."

Pancho nodded. He understood the last. Certainly Doña Anabella was a lady. She was a kind, beautiful lady and, as he had told her, he would be happy to give his life to serve her. Anabelle, far from being angry, was positively touched.

"You're really a nice boy," she said. "I'm sure you didn't mean to do wrong."

For a while they rode on in silence. Pancho was turning certain matters over in his mind. And presently he said:

"I am sorry Doña Anabella did not like the pictures of Felipe and old Lizarraga. But since that is so, if she desires it I shall destroy them."

Anabelle was delighted to hear that. Her words, she felt, had not been in vain. She decided to reward Pancho that afternoon with a five peso tip.

"Now that Doña Anabella has given me that beautiful box of paints," he continued, "I no longer need what is left of the black paint Don Roy gave me. With it I shall cover the pictures until they are entirely removed."

Anabelle was about to say some words of

## AN ARTIST PASSES

praise, but before she had an opportunity to do so he added:

"I shall do that this very afternoon if Doña Anabella is through with me in time. And tomorrow morning we can go there."

Anabelle had not expected that. But after all, she reflected, it would be nice to have some place where she could be herself. Roy and Minnie had begun to get on her nerves. If she became tired of Pancho she could tell him to go away. And perhaps, all alone there, she might be able to get again into the mood to write. It was really dreadful that she had been idle so long.

"All right, then," she said.

"And will Doña Anabella go there every morning?" asked Pancho.

She could not help laughing. "Maybe," she said. "Let's wait and see."

Pancho was satisfied. He could see that she was pleased with him and he grinned from ear to ear. It was the conceited, stupid grin of the village yokel, which, though she ought to have known better, Anabelle always thought boyish and charming.



## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

### III

"It's really extraordinary the way Anabelle has taken to the tropics," said Roy, a month later.

Minnie nodded. Anabelle had changed a great deal of late. She no longer lay in bed in the mornings, but was up shortly after Roy, who had to be at the mine by seven-thirty. She was always in a good humour. She looked, in fact, ten years younger than when she first came to San Cristobal.

"I don't see how she can ride about for hours in that heat and apparently not feel it at all," said Minnie, as Roy and she sat down to lunch.

Roy shrugged his shoulders. He was coming to the conclusion that he had all these years misjudged his sister. The tropics, it was said, brought out the worst in people, but it seemed to be just the opposite with Anabelle.

They had nearly finished the meal when they heard Anabelle and Pancho returning from the ride. A minute later she came into the room. Her face was flushed and happy. She kissed first

## AN ARTIST PASSES

Minnie and then Roy and, throwing herself into a chair, called loudly to Chata.

"We were just talking about you," said Roy. "Where did you ride today?"

Anabelle made a vague gesture. "Oh, somewhere over there. It was great."

In point of fact, she had spent the whole morning with Pancho in the abandoned hut. They went there every day now. Sometimes she sat for Pancho while he knelt on the ground at her feet and painted her. But more often Pancho did not paint, as for instance that morning. Anabelle, her eyes sparkling in her sun-burnt face, smiled to herself as she ate ravenously. Neither Roy nor Minnie knew about the abandoned hut. It was a secret that she shared with Pancho, a secret that she had good reason to guard most carefully.

## IV

That evening Pancho had a quarrel with his brother Felipe. It was really Doña Anabella who was to blame for it. Pancho, who confided every thing to her now, had told her that morning of

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

the very unsatisfactory financial arrangement Felipe had made with Don Roy. She had thought it very unfair and had urged him to stand up for his rights. Felipe, she said, had bullied him long enough.

It took Felipe a little time to recover from his surprise. He was very angry. He did not dream of letting Pancho get his hands on the fifty centavos he earned every day. What Pancho really needed was another thrashing.

Pancho was beginning to feel sorry he had followed Doña Anabella's advice, but he still had a trump card up his sleeve.

"You dare not beat me," he said.

Felipe laughed unpleasantly. "Why? Because you work for Doña Anabella?"

"Yes. If you beat me I shall tell her. She will tell Don Roy and then you will be discharged."

Felipe called him a fool and a he-goat, but he did not hit him. Pancho saw that his words had had the desired effect.

"It is you who are the *cabrón* and the fool," he said, taking a cigarette from his pocket. He was no longer afraid and he spoke insolently.

AN ARTIST PASSES

"Doña Anabella will do anything I ask of her," he added, "because she loves me very much."

Felipe gave a gasp of surprise. "*Dios!*" he cried. "You don't mean——?"

Pancho shrugged his expressive shoulders and lighted the cigarette.

"Yes," he said, "just that——"

## Chapter 6

### I

WHAT Pancho had told his brother was quite true. Doña Anabella and he were lovers. They had fallen into the situation imperceptibly and neither could have said when it was that the relationship of mistress and servant came to an end.

Anabelle had not been happily married. Her husband, a timid, rather dull man, some ten years older than herself, had never satisfied her passionate nature. Her daughter resembled him more than her. They had very little in common, and had she not given birth to Myrtle, Anabelle would have thought her a stupid, unimaginative girl. Besides, she was at that age when, given a romantic setting and a personable young man, a woman is very apt to fall in love. She either feels that she is recovering her lost youth, or, if too intelligent to delude herself, she endeavours thus to make the most of the few good years

## AN ARTIST PASSES

that are left her before old age sets in. Anabelle was forty-five and she felt that she had taken off ten years.

"I was like a bird slowly dying in a cage," she told Pancho, "and then you came and opened the door for me to escape. Now I am free, free, free!"

Pancho was gratified. If Doña Anabella would sit for him, he would paint her escaping from a cage. But Anabelle cried:

"No, no! Life is so short, my Pancho. We've got to make the most of every golden minute."

Pancho did not think that life was so very short, but of course Doña Anabella was right. Despite the fact that he was now her lover he was still very respectful towards her. Had he been intelligent enough to realize fully the hold he had on her he would not have been. He could have beaten her with impunity. Anabelle would have been hurt and would have wept bitterly, but she would have thought the beating romantic. This does not mean that he was always gentle with her. When his passions were aroused he was like a young animal. He had never known Maria more intimately than the iron bars of her window



## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

permitted. Doña Anabella was the first woman he had had. It did not matter to him that she was old enough to be his mother. The only shadow to cloud his complete happiness was the thought that one day Don Roy or the *patrona* might discover their relationship. He was intelligent enough to realize that they might not approve of it. But Anabelle told him not to worry.

"Silly boy," she said—she loved to call him that— "My life is my own. Don Roy has absolutely nothing to say about it."

She did not, of course, believe that. She knew very well that, if he found out, Roy would separate Pancho and her. Sometimes, before going to sleep at night, she rehearsed the things she would say to him. But, in her heart, she realized she would never be able to make him understand. He would see in this one great love of her life only a vulgar infatuation. Neither Roy nor Minnie had any imagination. They lived cold, unimportant little lives. She felt that her own was complete and wonderful. If Pancho were taken away from her she would kill herself. She made vague plans. Her husband, whom she had never loved, had left her enough money to live comfort-

## AN ARTIST PASSES

ably on. She would escape with Pancho from San Cristobal. They would be married and would live and love in some beautiful, romantic place. And clinging to her beloved, she stroked his coarse hair and kissed his brown cheeks, and cried:

“Kiss me, you silly boy! I love you. Oh, I love you so much!”

Pancho did so. He did not particularly enjoy it, however, for when his animal passions were satisfied he was, like all primitive people, rather a phlegmatic creature. He might have repeated with truth the words of the cynical French nobleman, “There is always one who loves, and one who lets himself be loved.” Sometimes, as he held Doña Anabella in his arms, he found himself thinking of Maria. He had not gone to see her for a long time. When old Lizarraga spoke to him about her he shrugged his shoulders. He did not think that he had ever loved Maria, certainly he did not love her now. He was quite satisfied with Doña Anabella. He realized that it had been foolish to take her advice and quarrel with Felipe about the wages. If he needed money he had only to ask her for it. He could get drunk in the

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

tavern every night now. What more could a man ask? Thus, for somewhat different reasons, both Anabelle and he were happy.

And so the days passed.

## II

One morning at about ten o'clock Minnie, who had the living-room cleaned thoroughly once a week, was busy seeing that Chata and another native girl did their work properly. Suddenly she heard Roy's voice outside. She was very much surprised and, wondering what had brought him back, she hurried to the door to meet him.

"There was an accident to one of the men at the mine," he explained.

Minnie understood at once what he meant. She had been down with him and had seen the men at work in the tunnels. Because she was a gentle creature she had felt very sorry for them.

And, in truth, the Indians who work the mines of Mexico lead a wretched life. They are paid a peso a day. As you watch them at work, naked and sweating, you think of them as tireless moles

## AN ARTIST PASSES

in the dim-lit bowels of the earth. Or, perhaps, it would be more apt to compare them with the burro, the national beast of burden. Silent, phlegmatic, they seem, like the burro, to have an incredible endurance. They are very superstitious, and here and there you see statuettes of *San Antonio*, the patron saint of the miners, which they take down with them, and which, eerie with candlelight, keep silent watch in the dark tunnels. They feel the utmost confidence in *San Antonio*. Occasionally, of course, there is an accident and someone is killed or injured. In that case, the saint is to blame, and they break his statue and curse him, and refuse to continue with their work. But the following day all is forgotten. The broken statuette is replaced. Pick and shovel resume their work. Labouring backs and grimy, brown faces stand out again against the heartless rock.

"Was he killed?" asked Minnie.

"Yes. The damned fool!"

Roy was really a good-hearted fellow, but he had been in Mexico too long to regard the Indians who worked in the mine as human beings.

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

"I see you've got house cleaning today," he added, as he looked about the living-room.

Minnie nodded. It would be a nuisance to have him around, and she said:

"If you've nothing else to do, why don't you catch up with Anabelle? She left with Pancho an hour ago. I'm sure she'd enjoy having you with her."

"All right. I might as well."

He called to Felipe and asked him if he knew where his brother had gone. Felipe shrugged his shoulders. He knew that Pancho and Doña Anabella went every day to the abandoned house on the other side of the village. He didn't think he ought to tell Don Roy, however.

"Come," said Roy, "haven't you any idea?"

Felipe shrugged his shoulders again. But one of the other *peónes* now said he had seen them riding in the direction of the village.

"That will do," said Roy. "I'll find them."

And mounting his horse he rode off along the road, raising a cloud of dust behind him. In the village he was told that Pancho and Doña Anabella had passed through. He stopped to have a drink in the tavern. When he got drunk there

## AN ARTIST PASSES

in the evenings Pancho often spoke about the wonderful paintings he had made of Doña Anabella. So old Lizarraga could tell Don Roy that they had probably gone to the abandoned house. It was not difficult to find.

"It is there that Pancho paints Doña Anabella!" he exclaimed.

Roy wondered why Anabelle had never spoken about the place. He rather looked forward to surprising her. Twenty minutes later, approaching at a canter, he saw the two horses which Pancho had left tied to the trunk of a *flamboyante* tree.

### III

The door of the house was closed, and, as he opened it, Roy expected to intrude on a quite harmless scene. Instead, he gave a gasp of amazement. He could hardly believe his eyes.

"What the hell—!" he cried.

Anabelle, almost fainting at sight of him, drew away from her lover's arms. Pancho scrambled to his feet. He glanced furtively at Don Roy and then his dark eyes moved about



## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

the room as though seeking a way of escape. But there was none except through the door, which Don Roy blocked, and so he backed towards the wall. The face of a Mexican Indian can be at times very expressive. Pancho's was alive with fear.

"How long has this been going on?" demanded Roy. He paid no attention to Pancho, but looked down at Anabelle who was still lying on the *petate*. She made no answer. She really was incapable of bringing out a single word. Bending down, he took her roughly by the arm and pulled her up. He repeated his question, and taking hold of the other arm he shook her violently. The shaking had the desired result. Anabelle found her voice.

"You don't understand," she said weakly, and suddenly started to weep hysterically.

"Stop it," said Roy. "I don't want any nonsense. I want the truth." And he changed his question somewhat, "How far has this gone?"

Anabelle managed to control herself. Her face turned painfully red and her lips quivered. She couldn't bring herself to look him in the face.

"I understand," said Roy grimly. "You don't

## AN ARTIST PASSES

have to say anything more. To think that a sister of mine, a cultured, refined lady, could do a thing like this—”

Anabelle was afraid he was going to strike her. She began to speak quickly, almost incoherently.

“But you don’t understand, Roy. I love him. I really do. You must believe that—please, Roy. Oh, don’t look at me like that—it’s not what you think—not at all—love, you know—” Talking seemed to give her courage and she went on breathlessly, “I knew Minnie and you wouldn’t approve. That’s why I didn’t tell you. Do try to understand, Roy. If you only knew how I loved him—I mean that social differences—love, after all—”

“Oh, shut up!” cried Roy. “I’ve heard about enough. Come on, now—”

From the wall came an inarticulate noise. It was a sound of pure animal fear, but Anabelle mistook it for something else. Tearing herself away from Roy she looked at Pancho and cried wildly:

“Pancho! Pancho! Do something! Don’t let him take me away!”

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

Pancho knew very well what she expected him to do. The muscles in his dark face twitched and his eyes dilated. He thought for a moment of drawing his knife, and then changed his mind. What was the use? He remembered stories Felipe had told at home of how Don Roy had knocked men senseless with a single blow. Besides, Don Roy always carried a revolver. He did not want to be killed. Doña Anabella cried again:

“Pancho! My love! Aren’t you going to save me?”

His knees trembling, he took a step forward and started to say something conciliatory. But just then Don Roy’s fist shot out and met the side of his jaw. That was the last thing he remembered.

When Pancho recovered consciousness he found himself lying across the *petate* where Doña Anabella and he had spent so many happy hours together. His jaw was very sore. He looked around dazedly. But Don Roy and Doña Anabella were gone.

## AN ARTIST PASSES

### IV

That evening Pancho did not come home to *cena*. He was afraid of the beating Felipe would certainly give him now that he was no longer under Doña Anabella's protection. He felt miserable and depressed. He had not deserved such misfortune. Why, he wondered unhappily, had Doña Anabella told him that they had nothing to fear from Don Roy? He cursed her and he cursed himself. What a fool he had been! He would receive not only a beating from Felipe, but he would be laughed at by the entire village. Lying on the ground, he looked up at the heavens. *Ay de mí!* Life was very hard. It was quite dark now. In the houses of the village candles, like mischievous children, stuck out their golden tongues. Pancho was very hungry. He thought of his mother's good *frijoles*. Felipe and Engracia and she were eating them as they sat round the oil lamp that Don Roy had given Felipe as a reward for his faithful services. He thought of his own reward, feeling his jaw which was still sore. *Carrajo*, it was all so unfair!

For another couple of hours he remained

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

there, nursing his grievance against the world. Then, feeling sure that his brother had gone to sleep, he got up and walked in the direction of the village. He had enough money to get drunk once more. And when he was drunk enough he was afraid of no one.

He found about a dozen men in the tavern and he saw at once that they knew what had happened. Pretending not to notice their amusement, he went to the bar. Old Lizarraga grinned broadly.

"Felipe has just been here," he explained. "He was looking for you."

Pancho shrugged his shoulders.

"I have no idea why Felipe wants to see me," he said. "I've come here to get a drink."

He gulped down the tequila the tavern-keeper poured out for him and asked for more.

"Felipe was telling us that he lost his job to-day," continued Lizarraga. "Don Roy doesn't want anything more to do with him because he's your brother."

Don Roy, in fact, had taken Felipe by the scruff of the neck and the seat of his soiled trousers and had kicked him out into the road. It was

no wonder that Felipe was angry. Lizarraga thought it had been very foolish of Pancho to annoy Don Roy.

"I've come here to get drunk, not to talk with you," said Pancho.

"I am sorry," answered Lizarraga, "but now that you have lost your job I must see your money first."

"Here, curse you!"

Pancho threw a handful of coins on the bar. He felt like sticking his knife into the tavern-keeper.

"And let me give you a piece of advice," added Lizarraga, as he filled the glass again. "Don't come hanging round my Maria again. If you do I'll treat you as Don Roy did Felipe."

A burst of laughter followed this. Pancho frowned darkly. If the old he-goat wasn't careful, he *would* knife him. He drank two more tequilas in quick succession. But, for some reason, the burning white cactus brandy did not have its usual effect. He felt not at all like knifing old Lizarraga, but rather like weeping on his shoulder. Presently he reached the point where a man



## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

feels the need of a woman's sympathy. He decided, despite what Lizarraga had said, to go to see Maria. He really felt that he was very much in love with her. She would forgive him and he would sing for her. His hands in his pockets, which were now quite empty, he reeled out through the door.

He found Maria at the window of her room. But she wasn't alone. With a start Pancho recognized Jacinto, the *pulpero's* son. Jacinto was singing *La Casita* and Maria was leaning dreamily against the bars. It was too much. The little devil who lives in each glass of tequila moved Pancho's hand toward his knife. At that moment Maria saw him. She gave a cry. Jacinto stopped singing. He too saw Pancho, also the knife in his hand. Because he had forgotten his own—a foolish thing to do in Mexico where a knife is frequently used to dispose of a rival suitor—he started to run away. But Pancho was too quick for him. As the knife flashed in the moonlight Maria shrieked wildly. The shriek was heard in the tavern. Her father and the others came to see what was happening. They found Jacinto, un-

conscious and bloody, lying at Pancho's feet. Pancho wanted to fight the lot of them. But old Lizarraga had brought an empty bottle with him, and coming up from behind he hit him on the head with it. Then someone went to fetch the *jefe*.

When Pancho opened his eyes he found himself handcuffed to a rusty iron ring on the wall of the *jefe's* patio. He was quite sober now, and he wondered what he had done. He shouted to the *jefe* to come and tell him. Presently the *jefe* appeared.

"You have knifed Jacinto," he explained. "If he dies you will have to pay with your life for the crime."

"Yes," said Pancho, "I remember vaguely now. I was very drunk."

The *jefe* nodded. He was quite cheerful about the whole matter. Whenever there was a crime in San Cristobal he had to take the perpetrator of it to Colima for trial, and this meant a pleasant holiday for him at the government's expense. He regretted that he had had to handcuff Pancho to the wall. He hoped he would not be too uncomfortable.

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

"It is nothing," said Pancho politely. "But will you light a cigarette for me? I have some in my pocket."

"Certainly." The *jefe* also lighted one for himself. Then, smiling as he thought of Colima and a little bright-eyed girl he knew there, he went back into the house. Pancho heard him speaking to his wife before he put out the lamp and returned to bed. He was all alone now save for a pig that lay grunting near-by. Because of the stars the patio was not very dark. Pancho remembered that Doña Anabella had once pointed Venus out to him and told him it was the star of love. He spat disgustedly in the direction of the pig. But his thoughts returned to Jacinto. It would be most unpleasant if he died. Pancho was always religious in an emergency. Looking up at the starry heavens, he addressed a fervent prayer to God, Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin and all the Holy Saints. Then, feeling he had done all he could, he finished his cigarette and settled down to wait for the dawn.

## Chapter 7

### I

IT may be that God decided to give Pancho another chance. Or it may be that Jacinto had an extraordinarily robust constitution. Anyhow, he didn't die, and Pancho got off with a sentence of six months at hard labour. Had he knifed Jacinto for some other reason than a girl, the sentence would probably have been longer. For in Mexico even judges are very sentimental over affairs of the heart.

At the trial no mention was made of Doña Anabella, and Pancho maintained stoutly—he spoke so fervently that by the time the trial was over he believed it himself—that he had always been in love with Maria, ever since he was a small boy when together they had played with the pigs and chickens in her father's patio. He swore the sincerity of his love by all the saints, especially by *San Antonio*, who since most of the men in San Cristobal worked in the mine was naturally

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

the favourite. The sight of Jacinto standing at the barred window of her room singing *La Casita* to her—it is perhaps as sentimental as any of the Mexican songs—drove him mad. He did not know what he was doing. He swore that he loved Jacinto as though he were his own brother. When he was a small boy he had played with him, even as he had with Maria. This, in fact, was quite true. Like most Mexicans, Pancho was a born orator. He spoke with passion, tears ran down his brown cheeks, now his voice was loud and brave, now soft and musical.

He really enjoyed the trial very much. Nor, though he was made to work very hard, did he suffer particularly during his term of imprisonment. He was given enough to eat, though he did not think the *frijoles* were as good as his mother's. The pallet he was given to sleep on was certainly more comfortable than the *petate* he was accustomed to. The only thing he had to complain about was the difficulty of obtaining cigarettes.

One Sunday afternoon, when he had been in prison about a month, he felt a keen desire to draw something. When she took him as her lover Doña Anabella lost interest in his art, and so he

## AN ARTIST PASSES

had drawn nothing for a long time. The beautiful white adobe wall of the prison was most tempting. One of the prisoners was writing with great difficulty a letter to his sweetheart, and Pancho borrowed his lead pencil. The others watched him curiously. He stood for a minute undecided, and then, with a grin, he made a caricature of Doña Anabella. It was inspired and cruel. He did not know it was a caricature. He meant it to be a true likeness of her. It was the best thing he had ever done. He felt that himself. The prisoners, crowding around, wanted to know whom he was drawing, and he explained that it was an American lady with whom he had been very much in love. He added that it was because of her that he was in prison. He started to make another drawing of her, but at that moment one of the guards came up. He did not appreciate art when he saw it, and he cursed Pancho and told him to stop spoiling the beautiful white wall. So reluctantly Pancho returned the pencil to its owner, who continued with his laborious letter.

This was the only thing Pancho drew while in prison, and sometimes, looking at it, he thought of Doña Anabella and wondered what had be-



## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

come of her. Occasionally, he also thought of Maria. By this time she was probably married to Jacinto. He did not care. He had really lost all interest in her. He also wondered whether Felipe had got his job back. He hoped so, for after all Felipe was his brother. He bore him no malice because of the numerous beatings he had given him. Perhaps he realized he had deserved them, perhaps not. He was not at all introspective. From a civilized point of view, he did not even know the difference between right and wrong. He felt no remorse, for instance, because he had knifed Jacinto. But then—as Anabelle Bronstrop often said before she fell in love with him—he was only a Mexican Indian.

## II

It rained on the day of Pancho's home-coming. He was weary and muddy, and, when at last he came within sight of the village, he wondered why his heart didn't leap with joy. He felt a decided disappointment. Comparing San Cristobal with Colima he found it mean and uninteresting. As he dragged his weary feet along the muddy road

## AN ARTIST PASSES

he told himself he was a fool. He ought to have remained in Colima. That was the place for a man. Or, better still, Guadalajara. Or, most wonderful of all, Mexico City. By which it may be seen that prison had not broken Pancho's spirit. It had instead educated and broadened him, had taken the village yokel and in six months changed him into a man of the world.

He found his mother sitting in front of the house. She was doing nothing at all and her mind was empty of thoughts. It is only primitive people who, when awake, have moments of such perfect repose. Because of the complexity of civilized life even the sub-conscious mind is worried with the many details of existence. Engracia, curiously enough, had gone to spend a couple of hours with Maria, who, as Pancho had expected, was now married to Jacinto.

"*Madre mía,*" said Pancho.

She looked up and gave an exclamation that was half surprise and half pleasure. How quickly time passed! It only seemed yesterday that the *jefe* had taken Pancho away. Throwing his arms around her, he embraced her, first over one shoulder and then over the other. Mexicans do

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

not kiss so much as the people of other countries. They have no need to do so. They can express with an embrace the most passionate of emotions.

"Where is Engracia?" asked Pancho.

His mother told him. He was glad that Maria and Jacinto were married. He bore Jacinto no ill-will because he had been sent to prison for knifing him.

"And what is Felipe doing now?"

She explained that Felipe had his old job back, Don Roy having realized after a time that he was not to blame for what Pancho had done. Pancho was even gladder to learn that.

"And what of Doña Anabella?"

"She went away from San Cristobal a week after the *jefe* took you to Colima. She came here and left a letter for you."

She had told neither Felipe nor Engracia about it. It was hidden at the bottom of an old wooden chest where she kept various odds and ends. She was very curious to know its contents. Though she did not tell Pancho so, she had intended to open it, but having hidden it away she had forgotten all about it. Pancho tore open the envelope, and the first thing he noticed was a bit

## AN ARTIST PASSES

of greenish-yellow paper that looked like the lottery tickets he had seen in Colima. He unfolded it, and suddenly he gave a cry of amazement. *Madre de Dios!* It was *dinero American*. It was, in fact, a hundred dollar bill. The letter contained only a few lines—

*Good-bye, silly boy. I shall never forget you.*

*Your broken-hearted*

*Anabelle Bronstrop.*

Pancho read it a second time, aloud. He could make out only the beginning, because he had heard it so often, and the signature.

“What does it say?” asked his mother.

“Doña Anabella says that she is still very much in love with me,” explained Pancho.

Turning the hundred dollar bill over in his hands he felt that this must be true. It was a fortune!

“It is too bad that Maria married Jacinto,” said his mother. “With all that money you will be able to buy a house, a pig, perhaps even a cow.”

Pancho made no answer. He was not thinking of Maria, but of Colima, of Guadalajara and Mexico City. Then, suddenly, his thoughts

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

soared. Mentally, he followed Doña Anabella to the *Estados Unidos*.

"Since Maria is married," continued his mother "perhaps you can find someone else. There is Rufina, for instance."

Rufina was really a very nice girl. Her father wasn't so wealthy as Lizarraga, of course, but he had just bought a new cow and, not long ago, his sow had given birth to nine wonderful little pigs. Pancho, she thought, ought to consider Rufina seriously. But he shook his head.

"No," he said. "I am not going to get married. I am going away from San Cristobal."

His mother was very much surprised. What did Pancho mean? He put the hundred dollar bill carefully away in his pocket.

"I'm afraid you won't understand, *madre mía*. I am no longer contented here. I want to go out into the great world. Perhaps I shall go to the *Estados Unidos* where Doña Anabella now is."

His mother thought he was crazy. She was beginning to regret that she had not given the letter to Felipe.

"What are you going to do there?" she asked. Pancho shrugged his shoulders.

## AN ARTIST PASSES

"I shall look for Doña Anabella. In the letter, as I have told you, she says she is still very much in love with me." After a moment he added significantly, "Doña Anabella is very rich. And in the *Estados Unidos* she can do as she likes. Don Roy cannot interfere there."

His mother sighed. "Well, don't decide too hastily. I think you had better discuss it with your brother. He is older than you and his advice will be good."

"Felipe is a fool," said Pancho. "I know very well what his advice will be, but I don't intend to take it."

He thought that since he had made up his mind it might be wise to leave before Felipe came home.

"But you have walked many miles today and you are tired. You must not think of such a thing."

"I am not at all tired, *madre mía*."

"Even so, why not wait until tomorrow?"

"I am sorry," answered Pancho, "but I hear the great world calling me."

His mother argued with him for another hour. She pointed out to him the many advantages of



## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

a quiet, happy life such as Felipe's. But Pancho said impatiently:

"I want something bigger. I don't want to live all my life in a miserable little place like San Cristobal."

He didn't know exactly what he wanted, but he felt certain, somehow, he would find it in the *Estados Unidos*. At last his mother gave up trying to dissuade him.

"All right, then," she said. "Have it your own way. You never would listen to reason. But I have a feeling you'll come home some day with your tail between your legs."

Pancho laughed. He was very fond of her, and he knew that, despite what she said, she wished him luck. Suddenly he remembered the box of paints Doña Anabella had given him. "Do you know where it is?" he asked.

"Yes. I'll get it for you."

He put the box under his arm. Then he embraced her and they went together to the door. Her heart was heavy, but she did not cry. Mexican Indian women seldom do.

"*Adiós*," she said. "Go with God, my son!"

The rain was over, and as he followed the

## AN ARTIST PASSES

muddy road Pancho looked up at the sky and saw a rainbow. It was a good omen. He imagined Doña Anabella waiting for him with open arms at the end of it.

## *Chapter 8*

### I

IT is not a great distance from Colima to Manzanillo. Pancho arrived there with the hundred dollar bill still in his pocket. Mexicans are hospitable people and it is very easy to get enough to eat. It is also quite easy to steal a ride on a freight train. You must know how to go about it, of course.

Pancho, because of his lack of experience, would probably have come to grief; but by good fortune he had made the acquaintance while hanging about the railroad yards in Colima of a man who had made the journey several times before. It happened that he was also on his way to Manzanillo, and so they had travelled together.

It was evening when they reached the port, and Pancho's companion, who had a few pesos in his pocket, suggested that they should go to a bar. Pancho agreed readily to the idea. He had thought it as well not to mention the fortune he was carrying. It was foolish to trust anyone.

## AN ARTIST PASSES

Besides, to while away the time, the other had told him stories to prove how adept he was at using a knife. Pancho felt he could use a knife pretty well himself, but he realized he was in no condition to fight. So now, as they made their way in the direction of the bar, the lighted windows of which they could see ahead of them, he said:

"It is very kind of you to invite me to have a drink, *amigo*. I am only a poor village youth, but I feel towards you as I do toward my own brother."

"It is nothing," replied the other. "You also are very dear to me."

They could hear the noise of a player piano pounding out a jazz tune. It was like a welcoming voice and they quickened their steps.

Manzanillo, though an important port, is not a large town. It is both dirty and unhealthy, and most of the Americans and Europeans who live there have malaria. It is not even picturesque, as many unhealthy, dirty places are. Because of the many ships that touch there the bars and the bawdy houses do a thriving business. Sailors will tell you, in fact, that they like Manzanillo.

The bar to which Felipe and his friend went

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

was one of the most popular, also one of the most disreputable. A ship had come in that morning, and so there was a crowd of drunken men, most of them *Americanos*, as Pancho could tell by their voices, by the strange oaths they swore and by the way they spent money. Standing at the bar drinking the beer his friend had called for, Pancho said to the bartender:

"It must be an American ship, *amigo*."

The man nodded. It was the *Faralone*, he explained, on its way to San Francisco.

Pancho gave a start. San Francisco! Why, that was the town where Doña Anabella lived. He remembered the name without difficulty because it was Spanish.

"Why are you so excited?" asked his companion.

When Pancho told him he laughed and shrugged his shoulders.

"So you want to go to the *Estados Unidos*," he said. "You won't get there without money, my friend."

"We shall see," replied Pancho, thinking of the hundred dollar bill in his pocket. "Buy me another drink."

## AN ARTIST PASSES

"I'd like to, but I've spent my last centavo. Let's get out of here and find a place to sleep."

"I'm going to stay a while longer," said Pancho. "I like it here."

"Well, I'm going. *Adiós.*"

"*Adiós,*" said Pancho, embracing him. "I enjoyed your company. I hope we shall meet again."

When the other had gone out through the door he ordered another drink, tequila this time.

"You have no money," said the bartender. "You have to pay for what you drink here." And, paying no more attention to Pancho, he waited on a burly, impatient *Americano*, whose blue shirt, open at the neck, disclosed a beautifully tattooed flag of God's Own Country. Pancho could not help laughing. He took the hundred dollar bill from his pocket and unfolded it carefully.

"You are mistaken," he said. "I am a rich man, as you can see."

The bartender shrugged his shoulders. He had seen many such bills and he was not at all impressed. In Manzanillo a hundred dollars is not considered a fortune. But he poured Pan-



## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

cho out a glassful of tequila. Pancho gulped it down and asked for another. *Carrajo*, but it was good! Could the bartender give him some information? He wanted to go to San Francisco in the *Estados Unidos*. Did he think the ship would take him? The bartender said he did not know. He was too busy to stand there talking and he turned away to wait on some other customer. Pancho was very disappointed. Suddenly he saw the burly, blue-shirted *Americano*, who was standing next to him, grin broadly.

"If you got some dough," he said, "maybe we can do business. Fix you up for a nice little trip to 'Frisco—eh, Mex?"

"Thank you," said Pancho, in Spanish of course. "It is very kind of you."

"Well, that's great. You just stick to Jake Flannagan and you'll be o.k.—see?"

Clapping Pancho on the back, he winked at several men standing near the bar and pulled him across the room to a table in the corner.

"How much dough you got?" he demanded, when they were seated and he had bellowed for drinks.

Pancho showed him all he had.

"It ain't much," said Flannagan, as he took the money and transferred it to his own pocket. Pancho, suddenly fearful, started to protest. But Flannagan clapped him on the back again and added: "Now don't you go to worrying, Mex. Said I'd get you on the *Faralone*, didn't I? Jake Flannagan ain't never been known to break his word. That's the kind of guy he is."

Just then the drinks arrived, and he paid for them out of Pancho's money. Pancho was beginning to feel very uneasy about the whole business. He understood all right, though he had been unable to make out only a few words of what Flannagan had said, that in exchange for the money he was to be taken on board the ship that would take him to the *Estados Unidos*. But what if this *Americano* didn't keep his word? He decided to try again to get his money back. But Flannagan roared at him to shut up and called him "a bloody, ungrateful greaser." His manner was so threatening that Pancho thought it best not to say anything more. He remembered the time Don Roy had knocked him out, and he had an idea that this Señor Flannagan could hit even harder.

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

So they sat and drank until the money was used up and both of them were very drunk. Flannagan had told Pancho the truth. He was a bully and a drunkard and many things that he ought not to have been, but he seldom broke his word. Finally, heaving himself up, he grasped Pancho's arm and said:

"Come along now, Mex."

Pancho came along obediently. Together they reeled out of the bar and made their way to the water front.

And that night, hidden beneath some tarpaulin on the deck, Pancho slept on board the *Faralone*.

## II

The *Faralone* left Manzanillo at eight o'clock the following morning, and at ten Pancho was discovered. He had just awakened and he wasn't feeling very well.

"Just a greaser," said the captain irritably.

It was necessary for him to know a little Spanish, and, frowning at Pancho, he asked him how in hell he had got on board. Pancho was afraid of him, but he was more afraid still of

## AN ARTIST PASSES

Flannagan who, when he hid him beneath the tarpaulin the previous night, had threatened to break every bone in his body if he gave him away. Frowning more blackly, the captain repeated his question. Pancho thought it wiser to say something, and he explained that he had been very drunk and could remember nothing at all. The captain showed his impatience.

"Well, you're here now," he said, "and I can't very well have you thrown overboard. I don't suppose you've ever been on a ship before?"

Pancho shook his head. He really wasn't feeling at all well.

"Take him down to the engine room," said the captain, and with a grin he added: "I dare say he'll be quite at home in the stokehole."

So Pancho became a stoker on the *Faralone*. He did not mind the heat, but he did not like the back-breaking work, and moreover he became very seasick. No one was sorry for him. His fellow stokers called him a nuisance and a bloody greaser. Weak from vomiting, Pancho decided he couldn't go on working. He put down his shovel. Looking into the furnace he was supposed to keep going he thought that the hell he

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

had once heard the *padre* speak about must be like this. For the first time in his life he was desperately homesick. Suddenly he heard a rough voice behind him and received a smart kick in the bottom. It was the third engineer.

"You yellow greaser!" he said. "Haven't you got any guts at all?"

Pancho did not understand him, but had he done so he would have thought it quite likely that he didn't have any guts left. The third engineer kicked him again and he hastened to pick up the discarded shovel. Though he continued to be sick, he did not put it down again.

So the days passed. A cargo steamer such as the *Faralone* does not travel very fast. Pancho suffered a great deal. It is only natural that the crew of an American ship should despise a greaser. He was kicked and knocked about. Only once did he draw his knife. Someone hit him just as he was about to use it, and when he came to the knife was gone. It was a miserable existence and he often wished that he were dead.

But at last the *Faralone* passed through the Golden Gate. Pancho was in the stokehole at the time and he offered a prayer to the *buen*

## AN ARTIST PASSES

*Dios*. Also, he thought of Doña Anabella whom, in his misery, he had forgotten. He hoped that he would have no difficulty in finding her.

It was afternoon when the *Faralone* docked, and that same night Pancho made his escape. He was afraid that someone would stop him as he went ashore. But no one did. He walked along the Embarcadero till he came to an empty lot, and here, while the crew of the *Faralone* sought wives and sweethearts and prostitutes, he covered himself with an old sack that he found and went to sleep.



## *Chapter 9*

### I

WHEN Pancho awoke he was cold and stiff. It was a raw, foggy morning, and the chill wind, blowing in from the Pacific, penetrated his thin cotton clothes, torn and very dirty from his work in the stokehole. He got up shivering. What, he wondered, should he do now? He was in a strange land among strange people. He was also hungry and he did not have a centavo in his pocket. All his bones seemed to ache. He felt as though he were only half alive. It is doubtful if in all San Francisco there was anyone more wretched looking, for in God's Own Country even the beggars on the street corners have a certain decency.

As he made his way from the empty lot, Pancho thought of Doña Anabella. What if he were unable to find her? The thought made his knees tremble and he felt a sinking sensation in

## AN ARTIST PASSES

the pit of his stomach. He still had the box of paints she had given him. It was his sole possession and he had clung to it, as a drowning man clings to a bit of driftwood, throughout his tribulation. He held it now tightly against him as he stood on the corner and looked into the friendless fog. But it was too cold to stand still. Dejected and shivering, he started to walk aimlessly along the Embarcadero.

It was too early in the day for many people to be abroad, and Pancho passed only an occasional shadowy figure. He was beginning to feel not alone hungry and cold, but also afraid. Suddenly he started. He listened again, and this time he knew he had made no mistake. Men's voices came to him through the fog and he could understand what they were saying. His heart beat wildly and he nearly burst into tears. They were countrymen of his. They would help him. He was no longer friendless and alone in a strange land.

A few minutes later he came upon a gang of Mexican labourers getting ready to start work near the corner of Mission Street where the tramway tracks were being repaired.

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

### II

"And what," asked Juan Moreno, "is your name, *amigo*?"

He stood leaning on his pick and regarded Pancho curiously. Pancho told him. He also explained how he had come to the *Estados Unidos*. He added that he was hungry and cold and exhausted and very, very happy to find a countryman who, he felt sure, would help him. Juan Moreno spat thoughtfully and offered him a cigarette.

"You seem to have had a bad time of it, *amigo*. I feel very sorry for you." He spat again and then added: "I am a poor man, but I cannot let a countryman starve."

He told Pancho where to find his coat, in the pocket of which was his lunch and a bottle of coffee. Pancho was beside himself with gratitude. He embraced Juan and assured him that he already felt towards him as he felt toward his own brother.

"It is nothing," said Juan. "I am glad to be able to help you."

## AN ARTIST PASSES

So Pancho ate and drank. When he returned to Juan he found him in conversation with the *Americano* who was in charge of the gang. Juan was telling him that Pancho was his cousin who had just come from Mexico. The *Americano* hesitated, and then catching sight of Pancho a grin spread over his good-natured, Irish face.

"All right," he said. "I guess I can put him to work. He sure looks as though he needed it. But I warn you, if I find him as lazy as you I'll kick you both out."

Juan translated this to Pancho. He also showed him how to use the pick and shovel. Thinking of the stokehole, Pancho did not find the work very hard.

"You must have handled a pick before," said Juan, as he watched him critically.

During his prison term Pancho had had, in point of fact, a lot of practice using pick and shovel. But he did not tell Juan this. Juan had been away from Mexico a long time, and he might not understand.

"No," he answered. "I have never done this sort of thing. I am an artist."

Juan was very much surprised.

### THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

"I paint pictures," added Pancho. "Did you notice the box I have with me? Well, it contains paints. It was given to me by an American lady whom I have come all the way to the *Estados Unidos* to find."

Juan was more surprised still.

"The lady," continued Pancho, "is rich and I have reason to believe that she loves me very much. When I find her I shall be able to repay you for all your kindness."

"It is nothing, as I have told you," said Juan. "But go on, *amigo*."

Pancho sighed and took hold of the pick again.

"It is a long, sad story," he said. "I shall tell it to you sometime when we are alone together."

### III

That evening Pancho went home with Juan and met his wife Dolores. She made him think of Maria, perhaps because she also had eyes as brown and soulful as the eyes of a deer. The *frijoles* and *tortillas*, he thought, were nearly as good as his mother's.

"Now," said Juan, "tell us a story."

## AN ARTIST PASSES

"Please, do," added Dolores, and she smiled at him with her eyes.

"Very well," said Pancho, "since you insist."

He really enjoyed telling it. He omitted only to mention the six months he had spent in prison. Dolores was very sympathetic, so was Juan.

"So now," concluded Pancho, "I am going to find Doña Anabella."

He could not think of the name of her dead husband, and he took from his pocket the letter she had left with his mother, unfolded it carefully, and looked at it. Bronstrop! That was it.

"Tonight," said Juan, "you will, of course, stay here with us."

"With pleasure," answered Pancho. "I love you both very much. You are like my brother and sister. And tomorrow I shall find Doña Anabella."

The following morning, when Juan had gone to work, he looked out the name with the help of Dolores in a telephone book. There were a dozen Bronstrops.

"There is only one thing to do," said Pancho. "I shall try them all."



## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

Dolores agreed with him that that was the logical thing to do, and, with a light heart and a suit of Juan's that gave him a sense of importance such as he had never felt before, he set out.

At the first address he was nearly bitten by a dog, at the second the woman who opened the door, being afraid of all Mexicans, threatened to call a policeman if he didn't go away, the third was an empty flat. Finally, cursing his luck, Pancho gave up in disgust. He had come to the conclusion that his quest was hopeless. San Francisco was too large. In comparison with it Colima was a mere village. The last address, scribbled by Dolores on the paper he was carrying, was in fact the right one. But even had he persevered and gone there he wouldn't have found Anabelle. Upon returning to San Francisco she remained only a short time. Her love affair with Pancho had awakened desires in her that life in the United States could not satisfy. So, leaving her daughter in the girls' boarding school where she knew she would be well taken care of, she had gone to Europe.

"It cannot be helped," said Juan, shrugging

## AN ARTIST PASSES

his shoulders philosophically when he came home from work and learnt that Pancho had been unsuccessful.

The next morning Pancho and he went to work together. Dolores had prepared lunch for both of them. Juan had told everyone that Pancho was his cousin. Side by side, they wielded their picks. The days passed, and Pancho, now a regular member of the gang, earned more money than he had ever dreamt of getting. Even though he had not found Doña Anabella, life he thought, was really very pleasant in the *Estados Unidos*.

## IV

Life continued thus for about a month, and then, due partially to the fact that the streets and the tramway tracks of San Francisco were in excellent condition and partially to the arrival of some hundred Mexican labourers from Los Angeles, Pancho found himself out of work.

"Now, don't you worry," said Juan. "Times

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

will soon be better. As long as I'm working you can stay here with Dolores and me. You'll have a roof over your head and enough to eat."

"You are really like a brother to me," answered Pancho gratefully.

He enjoyed lounging about, smoking and watching Dolores at her housework. Then one afternoon, because he had nothing else to do, he made a sketch of her as she was darning a pair of Juan's socks. She was delighted with it.

"I told you I was an artist," said Pancho. "If you like, I'll make a painting of you."

So, for the first time since he left San Cristobal, he opened the box of paints Doña Anabella had given him. The painting was nearly finished when Juan came home, but the dinner was not.

"It is not very good," said Pancho. "I have done nothing for so long that I am out of practice. I shall paint Dolores again tomorrow."

Juan preferred his dinner to a painting, but he was too polite to say so. Besides, he was very much in love with Dolores, and he could see that she was happy.

## AN ARTIST PASSES

Pancho painted Dolores every day now. He no longer even tried to find work. Juan was getting a little tired of supporting him, but again he said nothing.

The fourth painting that Pancho made nearly satisfied him.

"It is beautiful," said Dolores, as she stood admiring it.

Pancho, thinking again how much she resembled Maria, realized all at once that he had fallen in love with her. He did not think of Juan at all.

"It is not nearly so beautiful as you," he answered.

The compliment pleased Dolores, and she laughed happily.

"You are the most beautiful woman in the world," continued Pancho. He had come closer to her, and suddenly he took her in his arms and kissed her passionately. She struggled for a moment, and then he felt her giving way.

"You love me," he said, bending back her head and kissing her red mouth. "Tell me that you love me, *nena*."

Dolores, her lovely brown eyes half closed, sighed sensuously.

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

“Yes, Pancho. I love you. I love you better than Juan.”

Then she abandoned herself utterly to him.

### V

Juan had bought a bottle of tequila that afternoon. A Mexican labourer had brought it up from Los Angeles, which is not very far from the border across which Chinese and tequila are smuggled every day.

Juan was, therefore, in a happy mood as he opened the door of his house. He found Dolores and Pancho in the bedroom.

“Ungrateful friend!” he cried. “*Cabrón!* Son of the bad woman!”

Pancho, catching the glint of his knife, dodged to one side and thereby saved his life. Dolores shrieked. A moment later the two men were grappling desperately. The knife made a gash in Pancho’s arm, and, blind with rage, he tripped Juan and they rolled over on the floor. Dolores, realizing that one or the other would be killed, ran shrieking from the room. The neighbours came to see what was happening, also a police-

## AN ARTIST PASSES

man. But it was all over by then. Pancho, bloody and dishevelled, was leaning weakly against the table. Juan was lying at his feet. The knife was sticking in his body. He was quite dead.



## Chapter 10

### I

So for the second time in his life Pancho found himself in jail. Because there had been few crimes during the past month he had the cell to himself. He thought it was a very pleasant place and he made himself comfortable on the cot. Women, he reflected, were always getting him into trouble. He really didn't love Dolores at all. Why, then, had he killed Juan? He had asked one of the policemen in the patrol wagon what they were going to do with him, and he remembered how the policeman had grinned cheerfully as he told him that he would probably be hanged. Thinking of his words and especially of the graphic pantomime that had left no doubt in his mind as to the policeman's meaning, Pancho felt himself shuddering. The icy sweat of terror ran down his cheeks. He gave up all hope. He had no idea what the judicial proceedings were like in the *Estados Unidos*, but in the end, as

## AN ARTIST PASSES

the policeman had said, he would be hanged by the neck until he was dead.

He couldn't lie still any longer and jumping up from the cot he began to pace the cell. He thought of the bottle of tequila that Juan had brought home with him. The policeman who had arrived first had put it in his pocket. Pancho wished that he had drunk it after knifing Juan. He wouldn't be feeling like this now, for when he was drunk he was afraid of nothing.

In the morning a man came to the cell to talk with him. He could speak Spanish and he explained that he was a lawyer and that Pancho must tell him the truth about the murder. He also asked Pancho if he had any money. Pancho shook his head.

"I am a poor man," he said. He added that he was an artist. But the lawyer wasn't interested.

"Tell me about the murder," he said.

Pancho did so, and when he was finished the lawyer shrugged his shoulders.

"Is there any hope for me?" asked Pancho.

The lawyer shrugged his shoulders again. He did not say so, but Pancho could tell that he was of the same opinion as the policeman.

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

When the lawyer had left, Pancho, again in the throes of terror, fell on his knees.

"Oh, God," he moaned, "save me! I am too young to die. *Santísima Virgin! Jesús! San Antonio* and all the Holy Saints! Save me!" Then, quite mad for a moment, he started to curse. "*Carrajo!*" he shouted, shaking his fist at the bars of the cell. "Son, daughter, mother, father, brother and sister of a bad woman! *Cabrón!* A hundred, a thousand he-goats! I don't give a damn! If I've got to die I'll die. Yes, I'll die like a man and a Mexican. Like a patriot!"

He got up with flashing eyes. He was inspired by his own words. He really felt as though he were to be hanged, not for knifing Juan, but for serving his beloved country. He shook his fist at the bars again. Just then one of the jailers came to see what all the noise was, and he told Pancho to shut up. His voice broke rudely into Pancho's inspired thoughts.

"I am sorry," said Pancho, "if I have caused a disturbance."

"Oh, that's all right," said the jailer, who was used to outbursts of terror. He was about to turn away when suddenly Pancho had an idea.

## AN ARTIST PASSES

Terror had given way to the artistic impulse. He felt that he must draw, even as the previous afternoon he had felt that he must make love to Dolores. Could the jailer give him paper and pencil?

"I am an artist," he explained. "I want to draw a picture."

"Sure," said the jailer, "if it'll keep you quiet."

Presently he returned with a pencil and a sheet of paper, and, kneeling on the floor of the cell, Pancho started to draw a picture of his own hanging. The jailer watched him and shook his head. But Pancho no longer paid any attention to him. He was completely lost in his work.

## II

"Got anything that looks like a story for me today, Jim?" asked Pat Harley, the police reporter of San Francisco's largest afternoon newspaper.

"Don't think so. Things have been kind of quiet, you know."

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

Pat was about to leave when suddenly the jailer thought of Pancho.

"Funny customer for a Mexican," he said. "Spends his time drawing pictures. Might pay you to have a talk with him. You speak Spanish, don't you?"

Pat nodded. He had once spent several months in Mexico, where the owner of his paper had extensive interests. The morning papers had carried the story. A Mexican labourer murdered over a woman. Nothing of any great consequence. Because there was no other important crime to write about the story had been given more space than it deserved. But Pat, who had nothing better to do, thought he might as well have a look at the fellow.

He found Pancho, as the jailer had left him, kneeling on the floor of his cell. He had finished the picture of his hanging and he could not help chuckling over it.

"There," said Jim, "what did I say?"

Pancho looked up, and seeing that the jailer had returned with a young *Americano* he became rather self-conscious. He was surprised when Pat spoke to him in Spanish, and when he had

## AN ARTIST PASSES

been told that the *señor* was a newspaper reporter and that he had come to interview him he felt a sense of importance. He offered to show Pat the drawing he had made. Pat looked at it and asked:

"What is it supposed to be?"

"Myself, *señor*, being hanged."

Pat wondered whether the fellow was making fun of him, but Pancho's face was quite serious. Besides, on a closer examination, the drawing plainly showed a man dangling from the end of a rope. Pancho was anxious to have the *señor's* opinion of it.

"It's certainly extraordinary," said Pat, and turning to the jailer he added: "Thanks, Jim. There's a hell of a good story here. He's a queer bird, if there ever was one."

Pancho could see that the *señor* was interested, and he became very shy and developed a conceited grin—the grin of the village yokel which, unlike Anabelle Bronstrop, Pat knew very well. He asked Pancho a good many questions, about his career as an artist, his life in Mexico, and finally about the murder. Pancho gave a hopeless shrug. But he explained quite truthfully



## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

how, because he was out of work, he had been living with Juan and his wife, how he had painted Dolores, and how, finding her with him in the bedroom, Juan had tried to knife him.

"I am an artist and a peaceful man," concluded Pancho. "Juan and I were like brothers. I am sorry that I killed him."

"Did you tell all this to the lawyer?" asked Pat.

"*Sí señor*. But he seemed to agree with the policeman in the patrol wagon. I have given up all hope, as the *señor* can see by the drawing."

Pat thought for a minute. He was more interested even than Pancho imagined. And, all at once, he had a brainwave.

"By God, I'll do it!" he cried.

"Do what, Pat?" asked the puzzled jailer.

"I haven't time to talk now," answered Pat. Turning to Pancho he added in Spanish: "If you value your neck don't talk to anyone else. I'll be back in an hour."

Then, leaving Jim fully convinced that he was crazy too, he ran down the corridor.

## AN ARTIST PASSES

### III

An hour later Pat returned to the jail. He had had a talk with the editor of his paper and had convinced him of the soundness of his brain-wave. The editor was famous in San Francisco for his humanitarianism. He agreed with Pat that if the story Pancho had told him was the truth Pancho had killed the other Mexican in self-defence. It was an outrage, therefore, that the District Attorney intended to try him on a first degree murder charge. A poor, ignorant Indian artist being persecuted by the great machine of justice that was supposed to protect the weak and the innocent. It was a direct challenge to the editor's principles. It would also make a beautiful headline. He was really quite enthusiastic.

"Of course, we've got to make sure he's innocent," he said cautiously.

"Of course," agreed Pat. "I'm going back to him now. Then I'll see the District Attorney and have a talk with the woman."

"Try to get hold of the painting he made of

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

her," said the editor, as Pat hurried out of his office.

### IV

While Pat was explaining what the great paper he represented intended to do for him, Pancho's dark brown eyes opened very wide. So the policeman and the driver had been wrong. There was hope for him, after all. He felt convinced that his prayer of the previous evening had been answered and that Pat had been sent by the *buen Dios* to save him. He told Pat so. He nearly added that he already felt towards him as though he were his own brother, but thought he had better not.

"The main thing," said Pat, "is for you to keep your mouth shut. When we break the story every reporter in town is going to be here. You're not to talk to any of them, do you understand?"

Pancho did not understand what Pat meant, but he promised to follow his instructions precisely. He started to express his gratitude again, but Pat interrupted him.

"That's all right," he said. "I'm going to see your lawyer now."

The lawyer, who had a little, dingy office near the Hall of Justice, was surprised at Pat's visit. He was more surprised still when he had finished speaking. He could not understand why the largest afternoon paper in San Francisco should take such an interest in a Mexican labourer.

"We are doing it in the interests of justice," explained Pat. "Now, do you want to stay in the case or not? It'll be great publicity for you."

The lawyer was fully aware of that. It might mean fame and fortune. He assured Pat of his eagerness to do anything he could to save Pancho's neck.

"That's settled, then," said Pat. "I'm going to see the woman now."

He found Dolores, all in black, talking with a group of sympathetic neighbours. Her beautiful brown eyes were sad and tearful, but when she learnt that he was a reporter and had come to interview her she brightened up.

She had already told her story to the police. She had told it many, many times. She repeated it now again. She stressed the fact that Pancho

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

was her lover. It gave her a feeling of satisfaction that murder had been committed because of her. Pat understood the Mexican character, but he was very much annoyed. He realized that her story would not help Pancho in the courtroom.

"Are you quite sure that you are not exaggerating?" he asked.

Dolores was indignant that he should think such a thing.

"I am a beautiful woman," she said. "It is natural that men should love me."

"Even so," answered Pat, "I think it is unwise of you to insist that Pancho and you were lovers."

"But it is true," she said stubbornly.

Pat was not unsusceptible to feminine charm, but he found Dolores very trying.

"Has it occurred to you," he continued, "that the police may come to the conclusion that you were so much in love with Pancho that you conspired with him to bring about the murder?"

Dolores gave a little cry of alarm.

"No, no! It is not so."

## AN ARTIST PASSES

"The police," said Pat, "may think otherwise."

Dolores was terrified. She began to weep. *Madre de Dios!* what should she do?

"I really think you should do well to retract your story. You can say that in your hysteria you mixed things up a bit."

Dolores dried her tears. The *señor* was so kind. Would he tell her exactly what she should say?

Pat did. Where before she had seen a passionate love affair, he made her see now a beautiful, platonic friendship. Was Dolores quite sure that she understood?

"Yes, oh, yes! The *señor* is so kind."

"Fine," said Pat. "Better come along with me right now."

And, obediently, Dolores came.

## V

The story was a sensation. The largest afternoon newspaper in San Francisco raved about justice and the rights of the humble—especially the rights of a poor Mexican boy coming to the United States as to a haven of refuge. It painted



## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

Pancho as a genius, and throughout the trial carried his picture and his name in large black headlines on its front page. The largest morning newspaper—since it also was owned by the man who had such important interests in Mexico—did likewise. There was scarcely a person in San Francisco who did not know about the poor young Mexican artist who, according to the two papers, was being cruelly persecuted.

The trial did not last very long. Pancho's lawyer, thinking of fame and fortune, developed oratorical powers that surprised even himself. Dolores, having retracted the first story she told the police and bearing in mind Pat's warning, refused stubbornly to admit there had been between Pancho and herself anything but a beautiful, platonic friendship. She wept and looked at the court with her soft brown eyes. Her husband had come home with a bottle of tequila in his hand—no one could discover what had become of the bottle—and, crazed by jealousy and drink, had attacked Pancho with a knife. Pancho had defended himself. It was all perfectly plain. A case of justifiable homicide! Pancho, understanding only vaguely what was going on, sat motion-

less with bowed head and prayed to the *buen Dios* to help his powerful friends to save his neck.

And the *buen Dios* answered his prayer. The judge had political ambitions and he did not care to offend the two largest newspapers in San Francisco. His instructions to the jury were practically a request to find Pancho not guilty. The jury did not even leave the box. The judge spoke some words that Pancho did not understand, and a few minutes later Pat was clapping him on the back and telling him that he was a free man. Pancho was exhausted from the strain, but he felt himself very, very important. He was no longer a poor Mexican labourer. He was a man of mark. He had arrived! He no longer hesitated to tell Pat that he regarded him as he did his own brother. Pat seemed pleased.

"You're to do some sketches of the trial for the paper," he told Pancho, as they left the courtroom together. "Of course, you'll be paid for them."

Pancho was delighted to learn that. He started to embrace Pat, but, since he was well known about the Hall of Justice, Pat preferred merely to shake hands. All at once, Pancho remembered

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

something Doña Anabella had once said to him.

"I was a bird imprisoned in a cage," he said, "and you opened the door to let me escape."

Pat grinned cheerfully. But an interesting murder had been committed the night before and he was very busy. He hurried away, and Pancho descended the broad stairs leading to the street.

Standing in front of the Hall of Justice, he watched the traffic passing to and fro along Kearny Street. There were strange, vague stirrings in his soul that he couldn't understand. Never in his life had he been so happy. And suddenly, unable to contain himself, he threw back his head and burst into song.



Part 2

## THE ARTIST





## *Chapter 1*

### I

ON a certain evening in May, Pancho Ortega, the artist, having nothing else to do, sat in his studio and lazily smoked a cigarette.

The studio, before he moved in, had been a garage, and before that a stable. To reach it you walked along a driveway past a house that had once been a rather splendid place, but now, dilapidated and ramshackle, was in a moribund condition and usually to let. You felt certain that before long it would be torn down to make place for an apartment house.

Pancho Ortega, the artist, differed greatly from the poor Indian boy who, three years before, had come to San Francisco. He was, for one thing, not so good-looking, for he was rather stout and his face showed lines of dissipation. He spoke English fluently, however, and knew a great deal, or anyhow talked a great deal, about ancient Mexican art. On the walls of his studio

## AN ARTIST PASSES

hung Aztec and Maya designs, very decorative and colourful, and there was an image of *Xochiquetzal*, the Goddess of Love and Flowers. It was the work of a sculptor who had been a friend of Pancho's until one night, inspired perhaps by the Goddess herself, Pancho made love to his girl. The studio, especially when it was dimly lighted and a stick of incense was burning under *Xochiquetzal's* nose, had a romantic, even a seductive, atmosphere. And Pancho knew how to make love beautifully. Women found him charming and sophisticated. He had to laugh when he thought of his first love affair. He had not forgotten Anabelle Bronstrop, and he wondered sometimes what had become of her.

But he never spoke about his life in Mexico to anyone, or, to be more exact, he spoke about a life that was not his own. He claimed as his birthplace the city of Guadalajara, which he had never seen, and the women he made love to did not doubt his word when he told them that his family was one of the oldest in Mexico. This was, in fact, quite true, for the inhabitants of San Cristobal were of pure Maya blood. And, as the excavations in Yucatan and elsewhere have

## THE ARTIST

proved, the Maya Indians had a splendid civilization long, long before Columbus came to America. He also refrained from mentioning the time when he was tried for murder. Most things can be forgotten in three years, and of all the people who came to the studio only Pat Harley and his wife knew the truth. Pat, who was still police reporter on the largest afternoon newspaper in San Francisco, had married Milly shortly after the trial. They really felt that it was Pancho who had brought them together. As a reward for saving his neck, or rather getting the paper a scoop, Pat was given the substantial raise that had made their wedding possible. They came to the studio often. Pancho was expecting them, in fact, on this particular evening. He hoped they would bring something to eat and drink, for he had no money to go out to dinner. He had sold nothing for months.

Tossing away the stub of the cigarette he had been smoking, he glanced ruefully at a little mongrel dog that was moving restlessly about sniffing at the floor.

"Come here, Chilito," he said. "*Pobrecito!* I know you're hungry."

## AN ARTIST PASSES

The dog had been picked up one evening on the street by a Mexican girl he used to live with. The girl, whose name was Vicenta, had left him to go to Los Angeles. He had kept the dog. He did not know why. He was very fond of it now, even though he sometimes mistreated it. And Chilito loved him.

"No one has ever loved me like that," Pancho often said.

And he was right.

## II

Pat and Milly came at about nine o'clock, and they brought a bottle of red wine, a loaf of bread, and some cheese and sausage.

Chilito, happy at the sight of food, jumped around Milly and barked. He liked women, but could not stand men. Once, despite the many meals he owed him, he had even snapped at Pat. Milly bent down and petted him.

"He's getting fatter every day," she said. Pancho grinned. "So am I. But I'm sure it's not because we eat too much."

"I thought you expected to sell a picture this

## THE ARTIST

week," said Pat, as he helped Milly off with her things and placed them on the couch where Pancho slept.

Pancho shrugged his shoulders. "People don't seem to want my work any more. I don't know why." He sighed, broke off a bit of bread and threw it to Chilito. The dog ate it ravenously and barked for more.

The studio was not very tidy. It never was when Pancho lived alone. He apologized for its appearance. Throwing a dirty shirt from a chair that stood in front of *Xochiquetzal*, he said:

"Sit here. I like to see you and the Goddess together. It is such a contrast of beauty and ugliness."

Milly sat down with a laugh and Pat, lighting a cigarette for her, smiled good-naturedly. Pancho often paid extravagant compliments to Milly, but he was always respectful towards her. She was the only woman who came to the studio whom he did not try to make love to. It may be that he realized it would be useless, for she was very much in love with Pat, and it may be that he remembered the time when Pat had saved his neck. Pat really understood him better than any-

## AN ARTIST PASSES

one else. He knew that he was a liar and a lazy, sensual rascal, but he could not help liking him.

"Now," said Pancho, when Chilito and he had satisfied their hunger, "I am a contented man." He took another drink of the wine, and added: "I am inspired. I am really in the mood to start the painting of Milly that we have so often spoken about."

"Oh, my dear!" cried Milly.

Pancho could see that she was pleased.

"You can't get out of it now," he said. "You've got to pose for me."

"But I've never posed before. I shouldn't know how to go about it."

Pancho took her hand and pressed it to his lips.

"That's nothing. You just sit where you are in front of *Xochiquetzal*. It is you really who are to me the Goddess of Love and Flowers."

He was convinced it was going to be his masterpiece. Five minutes later he was standing at his easel, and the strong light by which he worked flooded the studio, picking out plainly the untidiness and the dust.

A half-hour later someone knocked on the door and Chilito started to bark.



## THE ARTIST

"You've got a visitor," said Pat.

Pancho frowned and shrugged his shoulders.

"You see how it is. The moment I settle down to work someone comes and interrupts me."

The knocking continued, and, followed by Chilito, he went reluctantly to open the door.

The visitor was a young woman with pale blue eyes and a sallow complexion. She had been at the studio once before, and Pancho introduced her as Lulu.

"Smith," added the girl, with a giggle. "Easy to remember, ain't it?"

Pat and Milly thought her rather stupid, but they could see that Pancho was delighted to have her there.

"Lulu," he explained, giving her arm a little squeeze, "was at the last party I had."

Whenever Pancho had money, Pat knew, he gave a party. Milly would never come to these affairs. She thought them vulgar and disgusting. And they really were. Everyone got drunk and there was a great deal of noise and a lot of promiscuous love-making. Pancho always enjoyed himself hugely. He would have liked to give a party every night.

## AN ARTIST PASSES

For the next ten minutes he was too busy making Lulu feel at home to pay more than casual attention to Pat and Milly, and, exchanging an amused glance with his wife, Pat got up and said:

"I think we'd better be going. I've got to be at the office quite early tomorrow morning."

Pancho begged him and Milly not to go yet, but they knew him very well and they saw that he only said that because he wanted to be polite. Except when he was drunk, he was always polite.

He accompanied them out to the street, and he kissed Milly's hand and expressed the hope that she would pose for him again soon.

"I'm very angry that Lulu came," he said. "But she's here now and I've got to be nice to her."

"Of course," said Pat, as he shook hands with him. "Good-night. See you soon."

"*Adiós*, then. I love you both very much."

And, putting them from his mind, Pancho returned to his studio.

## THE ARTIST

### III

"*Nena*," murmured Pancho an hour later, as he sat on the couch with his arm around Lulu. "To me you are the Goddess of Love and Flowers!"

She thought he was just too wonderful, and she said so. Drawing her closer to him he kissed her.

"I love you, *nena*. I have never loved like this before."

Lulu, lying back in his arms, gave a little sigh. She had worked very hard that day behind her counter in the Emporium and she was tired.

"I got to be going soon," she said.

But Pancho kissed her again.

"Don't go," he begged. "I really love you, Lulu."

"But it's late, Pancho. I got to get some sleep. I'm a poor working girl, you know."

She thought that very funny and she giggled over it.

"Stay here with me," said Pancho, keeping

#### AN ARTIST PASSES

her imprisoned with his arms. "I love you. Say that you'll stay, *nena*."

And, in the end, Lulu stayed.

#### IV

Next morning, when she was about to leave to go to work, Pancho asked:

"Are you coming back this evening?"

"I don't see how I can, Pancho."

"Please come back," he said. "I want you here with me always. I love you very much."

"Say, do you mean that?"

Pancho said he did. He really needed a woman about the studio. He wondered whether Lulu could cook. Taking her in his arms he kissed her passionately.

"Promise that you'll come back, my love."

"All right," she said. "Let me go now. I promise."

## Chapter 2

### I

So Lulu came to live at the studio. She did not know how to cook very well, but when she came home from her work she made everything clean and tidy, so that the studio became a pleasant, comfortable place. She earned, besides, thirty dollars a week, and every evening she took Pancho to dinner and brought home bones and scraps of meat for Chilito. Though her features were indifferent, she had a beautiful body. Sometimes she posed for him. And one Sunday morning he was inspired to paint her as a modern *Xochiquetzal*. Lulu was delighted. She was really very much in love with him.

"It will be my masterpiece!" he told her enthusiastically.

He worked very hard all day, and when Pat and Milly looked in on him late in the afternoon they found the painting well started. They ac-

## AN ARTIST PASSES

cepted Lulu as they had accepted Vicenta and all the other women who had lived with Pancho. When they entered the studio she was holding a kimono around her. Pancho explained what he was doing.

"If you don't mind," he said, "I'll keep on for a little while. Lulu has to go to work tomorrow and tonight I'm sure to have company."

He was surprised when Lulu refused to go on posing. Like many vulgar and sensual people, she was curiously ashamed of exhibiting her nudity. She looked at Milly and flushed.

"I don't care to pose in front of strangers," she said.

Pancho couldn't help laughing. Why, Pat and Milly were his best friends. Vicenta had often posed while they were there.

"I don't care," said Lulu sulkily. "I won't do it."

Pancho, still laughing, put his arms around her and kissed her. He tried to pull away the kimono, but she kept a tight hold on it.

"Oh, let the girl be," said Pat.

Pancho shrugged his shoulders. He was very much annoyed.



## THE ARTIST

"All right," he said, "go and get dressed. I'll work instead on Milly's painting."

Milly was a little embarrassed at the scene Pat and she had caused. She could not understand Lulu's prudishness. She sat for Pancho for an hour, and then Pat suggested that they should all go to dinner. Pancho was pleased. The painting was coming along very well and he was hungry. He wasn't even angry any more with Lulu. "She may not be so much with her clothes on," he said, "but naked she's wonderful. I'm sorry you didn't see her."

Lulu drew away from him and told him to keep still.

"But it's true, *nena*. You've got the most beautiful body in the world."

And, laughing at her embarrassment, he put his arm around her and gave her a kiss.

## II

When the painting of Milly was finished Pancho decided to celebrate the occasion by giving a party. He had not had one for a long time.

## AN ARTIST PASSES

He wrote to all his friends, and then asked Lulu to lend him twenty dollars.

"All right," she said, "but you got to give it back. How much are you going to charge Pat for the painting?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, don't let it go too cheap," she added. "He makes a lot of money in the newspaper."

Pancho gave her a kiss, put the money in his pocket, and went off to a place where he knew he could buy some tequila.

The party was a great success. When Milly and Pat arrived everyone was already half drunk. Pancho received them enthusiastically.

"There's a lot of booze," he told them, "and everybody is crazy about the painting."

That was quite true, though, for the most part, the people who came to Pancho's parties knew more about drinking than art. At sight of Milly, Lulu ran up to her with a shrill cry and gave her a kiss. She had never done that before. But, then, she always became boisterous and demonstrative when she was drunk. Taking Milly by the arm, she pulled her over to a table where a blond young man, with a weak chin and pimply

## THE ARTIST

face, was acting as bartender. He poured out a glassful of bootleg whisky and ginger ale, and between them Lulu and he tried to induce Milly to drink it. She shook her head and laughed, glancing over to where Pat and Pancho were standing together, talking.

"We really can't stay," Pat was saying. "So I want to settle with you for the painting."

Pancho was indignant. What did Pat take him for? He wouldn't charge anything for it. Not a cent! Pat was his friend. No, he was more than a friend. He was like his own brother. He embraced him and clapped him on the back.

"All right, then," said Pat. "Thanks very much. I'll make it up some other way."

When Pat and Milly had left, taking the painting with them, Lulu took Pancho aside and asked:

"How much did you get out of him?"

"Not a cent," he told her proudly. "Did you really think I'd charge him for it? He is like my own brother. Besides, he saved my life once."

Lulu was furious. "You've got a nerve! What about the twenty dollars I lent you?"

Pancho shrugged his shoulders. Twenty

## AN ARTIST PASSES

dollars meant nothing to him just then, nor a hundred, nor a thousand. He was gloriously drunk. But Lulu wasn't finished yet.

"I won't stand for it!" she cried. "I'm tired working like a slave to support you. I'm through! Do you hear me? You're nothing but a lazy bum!"

"Go to hell!" said Pancho, and pushing her roughly out of the way he went unsteadily over to the table where the blond-haired young man poured him out a drink of the excellent bootleg whisky Milly had refused.

Lulu sulked until the party was over, and when, in the small morning hours, the last of the guests had gone she recommenced the quarrel. They were both very drunk. Pancho was at first quite good-natured.

"Let's go to bed," he suggested, as he took off his coat. "We'll discuss it some other time."

"We'll do no such thing! I'm through with you. You're a drunken loafer. You're no good. I wish I'd never come to live with you!"

Pancho laughed and lurched forward to take her in his arms and give her a kiss. But, suddenly beside herself, she picked up a glass and threw it

## THE ARTIST

at his head. It missed him. She reached for another one, but he was too quick for her. He was not good-natured any more. Grasping her roughly, he pushed her against the wall.

"Don't you dare to hit me!" she cried.

He cursed her and hit her on the mouth.

"You brute! You Mexican beast!"

Weeping hysterically, she began to fight him. He hit her again and again. Then, bruised and sobbing, he threw her on the floor. He felt, all at once, very tired. Paying no further attention to her, he lay down on the couch and went to sleep.

## III

When Pancho awoke Lulu was gone. She had taken her two handbags with her and had packed and locked her trunk. He remembered vaguely that he had given her a beating. He cursed himself for a fool. He would miss the money she earned and he would not be able to finish now his painting of a modern *Xochiquetzal*. He kicked savagely at Chilito who was biting one of his shoes.

## AN ARTIST PASSES

But when, later in the day, an expressman called for Lulu's trunk Pancho shrugged his shoulders philosophically. His mood had changed and he felt now very sentimental, as he sometimes did after a night of debauch. He called to Chilito, and when the dog came to him he took him on his knees.

"No one loves me but you," he said.

Chilito did not understand, of course, what he was saying, but he liked to be petted and he arched his little fat back and wagged his tail.



## Chapter 3

### I

RETURNING with Chilito from a walk one afternoon, Pancho was surprised to find the girl Vicenta on a battered old trunk by the door of the studio.

"I didn't have any luck in Los Angeles," she said. "I have no money and no place to sleep. Will you take me back?"

Pancho thought she looked thin and tired. She must have had a bad time of it.

"I always loved you, Pancho."

He shrugged his shoulders. "Then why did you leave me to go to Los Angeles?"

"I was foolish. I've regretted it many times."

Chilito was rubbing his back against her leg and she bent down to pet him. Suddenly she started to cry.

"See," she said, "Chilito wants me back."

Chilito was certainly making a great fuss over her. Pancho remembered her *frijoles* and *tor-*

## AN ARTIST PASSES

*tillas*. He really felt very sorry for her. He shrugged his shoulders again.

"All right," he said. "You can stay."

## II

And he did not regret it. Vicenta and he got along very well together. Her cooking was as good as ever and, though she was rather indolent and phlegmatic, she kept the studio fairly clean. On the whole, he preferred her to Lulu. She did not mind if, when he was drunk, he sometimes beat her, and she felt that the savage love-making that usually followed the beating more than made up for a sore back and a few bruises. Her body, to be sure, wasn't at all beautiful. He found it impossible, with her posing for him, to finish his painting of a modern *Xochiquetzal*. He told Pat so one evening when Milly and he had come to eat a Mexican dinner that Vicenta had prepared.

"But," he added philosophically, as he helped Pat to more *frijoles*, "she's a wonderful cook and she loves Chilito. And, after all, you can't expect everything in one woman."

## THE ARTIST

### III

So for two months Vicenta and Pancho lived together. In that time, he sold only one picture for a hundred dollars. He gave a party, and Vicenta and he got very drunk.

The following day, walking along Market Street, he met a woman he had not seen for nearly a year. She had once been at the studio and had bought a number of things. Her name was Miss Sievers.

"I have a friend," she said, "who has just returned from Europe. She knows Mexico and ought to be interested in your work. I'll bring her to the studio sometime."

Pancho was delighted. "I shall look forward to meeting her. Come to see me any time you like."

They came that same evening. Opening the door for them, Pancho saw an expensive motor-car parked in the driveway. The friend about whom Miss Sievers had spoken gave a little cry at sight of him. He could hardly believe his eyes. He stared at her and could think of nothing to say.

It was Anabelle Bronstrop!

## AN ARTIST PASSES

### IV

"You have changed," said Anabelle, when they had recovered from their mutual amazement and were sitting together on the couch. "But I recognized you at once."

When Yvonne—that was Miss Sievers—had told her the name she had felt suddenly certain that this must be *the* Pancho Ortega. She thought of San Cristobal, of the many happy hours she had spent with him, of that time when Roy had found them together in the hut. Well, she had been right. She had always said that Pancho would one day amount to something.

"So Doña Anabella has not forgotten," said Pancho.

"How could I?" Anabelle laughed and patted his arm. "I have thought of you many times, you silly boy."

"I am not a silly boy any more," said Pancho. "I am a man and an artist. But tell me," he added, "how is everything in San Cristobal?"

Anabelle said she did not know. Her brother

## THE ARTIST

was no longer there. He was now with the American Smelting Company in Chihuahua City.

"There was a lot of trouble in San Cristobal," she said. "A revolution or bandits. I never got it quite straight."

Pancho was sorry to learn that. He had not thought about San Cristobal for a long time, nor had it ever occurred to him to write home.

"And all this time you have been in Europe," he said thoughtfully. "It must be a wonderful place."

Anabelle sighed and gave his arm another pat. Until Yvonne mentioned his name, she had, in fact, forgotten him. She had been very happy in Paris. She had fallen in love with a young Russian prince. That was the reason she sighed now. He had left her to marry an English heiress. At the same time she had received a letter from her daughter, who for three years had been taken care of by her grandmother and the boarding school from which she was about to graduate. Anabelle felt almost like a stranger towards her, but it had been a shock to learn that the girl had fallen in love and intended to get married. So,

## AN ARTIST PASSES

partly because she felt it her duty as a mother to do so and partly because she wanted to forget the young prince, she had returned to San Francisco.

She explained to Pancho about her daughter's marriage, which was to take place in a fortnight, but she did not mention the prince. She was a little surprised that, sitting next to Pancho, she could think of him without pain.

"And now," she said, "tell me all about yourself."

He did so, quite truthfully. He told her how he had come to San Francisco to find her, how he had killed a man, how Pat Harley had saved his life, and how he had started on his career as an artist.

"You poor silly boy!" she cried. "And to think I was the cause of it all. I'm convinced that Fate has brought us together again."

Pancho wondered if she was still in love with him. Perhaps she would buy some of his pictures. He offered to show them to her. She admired them all.

"They're wonderful," she said.



## THE ARTIST

Pancho was gratified. "I shall be happy to make you a special price."

"I won't hear of such a thing, you silly boy."

She selected three, and sat down to write out a check.

"Yvonne and I must be going now," she said. "But I'll come to see you again tomorrow."

She handed him the check, and suddenly, unable to restrain herself, she gave him a kiss.

"You don't mind?" she asked, laughing.

Pancho didn't, of course. But Vicenta didn't like it at all. When, having accompanied the two ladies to the motor-car, he returned to the studio she demanded angrily:

"Why did that woman kiss you?"

Pancho shrugged his shoulders. He was very happy. Taking the check from his pocket he looked at it again.

"It is easy to see that she is in love with you," said Vicenta, looking at the check also.

"Perhaps she is," he answered.

"And do you love her?"

"No," he said. "I have never loved her. But she is very rich. She can do great things for me."

## AN ARTIST PASSES

### V

Anabelle came to the studio every day now, and whenever she came Pancho sent Vicenta away. Anabelle could not help but see that the girl hated her.

"Don't mind her," said Pancho. "She doesn't mean anything to me. You see how it is. I've got to have someone to keep the place clean and cook for me."

"I'm glad you feel like that about her," answered Anabelle. "She's all right as a servant, of course. But she's a very low type."

Pancho nodded. He always agreed with whatever she said. It was quite plain to him that she was jealous of Vicenta. They spent many hours sitting on the couch, talking of his work and also of hers. She was planning to write another novel just as soon as her daughter was married. She told him all about it. He was not very interested, but he listened patiently. In return, he told her of his dream to paint a modern *Xochiquetzal*. She clapped her hands ecstatically.

"I have a feeling," she said, "that we shall inspire one another."

## THE ARTIST

She spoke often of Paris. Beautiful, gay, wonderful Paris! That was the place for an artist.

"You'd love it there," she told him.

## VI

On the day that her daughter was married Anabelle did not come to the studio, but the following morning she arrived at ten o'clock. Pancho had only just got up and he was surprised at such an early visit. He could see that she was nervous and excited.

"How was the wedding?" he asked.

Anabelle said everything had gone very well. Then, seeing Vicenta, who was washing one of Pancho's shirts, she whispered to him:

"I've something very important to tell you. I want to be alone with you. Can't you get rid of her for an hour?"

When Vicenta, making no effort to conceal her anger, had gone, they sat down on the couch. Pancho wondered what it was that she wanted to tell him. It was evident that she found it difficult to begin. But suddenly she cried:

AN ARTIST PASSES

“Oh, my Pancho! Can’t you see? I love you! love you! love you!”

He was surprised at this outburst of passion. He could think of nothing to say for a moment, and she went on breathlessly:

“Now that Myrtle is married I am all alone. Free to do as I like. Come away with me, my beloved. I’ll take you to Paris. I’ll give you everything you want. Oh, say that you love me!”

“Of course, I love you,” he answered. “I have always loved you.”

He kissed her, and with a sensuous sigh she lay back in his arms.

“You are so strong,” she said. “Kiss me again, my love.”

As he did so he noticed the scraggy skin of her neck. He wondered how old she was. Fifty, perhaps.

“When do you want me to go with you to Paris?” he asked.

Anabelle was about to reply, but all at once she thought of the young prince who had deserted her so cruelly. And so, snuggling close to him, she said:

“First we must be married, you silly boy.”

## THE ARTIST

Pancho had not thought of marriage. But it made no difference.

"When, then, do you want me to marry you?"

"Today," she cried. "Right away!"

"All right," he said "I'll just leave a note for Vicenta."

Anabelle, trying to control herself, remained sitting on the couch. He wrote the note and pinned it to the chest of *Xochiquetzal*. Then he put on his hat. Chilito, thinking his master was going to take him for a walk, started to bark. Turning to Anabelle, Pancho asked:

"Can Chilito come with us when we go to Paris?"

She had never paid much attention to Chilito, and she thought he was rather a dirty little dog. But she answered:

"Of course, if you want him."

Pancho was pleased and he gave Chilito a pat.

"That's fine," he said. "I'm ready now. Let's go."





Part 3

THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST



## *Chapter 1*

### I

ANABELLE took an apartment in Montparnasse. It was beautifully furnished and was in the first story of a very modern apartment house. Because of its modernity and the many American conveniences it offered, the rent was rather high. But, then, a dollar goes a long way in Paris. Though her income was only half what it had been before her daughter became of age, Anabelle was still a wealthy woman. She could not, to be sure, keep a motor-car and a chauffeur, as she had done when she was supporting the young Russian prince. But she made the sacrifice gladly. She resigned herself to riding in taxicabs and set about making life pleasant for Pancho.

This was not difficult to do. She found Pancho easy to please and not nearly so expensive as the prince. His tastes were very simple. He really did not appreciate the beautifully furnished apartment. He had been far more comfortable in

his studio in San Francisco. It never occurred to him to take a bath every day, and when Anabelle mentioned the matter he shrugged his shoulders.

"It is a waste of time, my love," he said. "I do not get dirty so quickly."

Anabelle did not insist. She always let him do exactly as he wanted. She was very much in love with him. She had had photographs taken of his paintings—the originals adorned the walls of the apartment, which she referred to as their studio—and had sent them to all her relatives and friends. He had done nothing new since they were married, but she felt this was only natural. "He has to get used to Paris first," she told herself. It was the same with her. Though she had made several attempts she had found it impossible to get her novel started. But she was fully convinced that she had married a genius. Sometimes, sitting on his knees, she ran her fingers through his long black hair and asked:

"Are you happy, you silly boy?"

And always he answered: "Of course, *nena*. I love you very much."

He did not love her at all, and, comparing her with the many young women he had known, he

## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

did not enjoy making love to her. But he thought it was very pleasant to be a married man. He had all the money he wanted. There was really no reason why he should work any more.

And he liked Paris. At first, to be sure, he missed Chilito, who had died on the journey, but he soon got over that. The lazy life of Montparnasse appealed to him. He ate and drank a great deal, and from lack of exercise became soft and fat. Even Anabelle noticed it.

"You're getting quite a tummy," she said. "You really ought to do something to reduce."

But Pancho only laughed and shrugged his shoulders.

They always got up rather late, and when Anabelle had had her bath and they had eaten the *petit déjeuner* which the maid brought to the apartment they got dressed and went out to lunch. Afterwards they sat in one of the cafés, and sometimes Anabelle went shopping. After dinner they sat again in the Café du Dôme or the Rotonde or the Select. Anabelle could never drink very much without getting sick, and so she sat, watching Pancho drink, and smoked innumerable cigarettes through a very long, very or-

## AN ARTIST PASSES

nate cigarette holder. She felt that life was complete and wonderful, and so did Pancho. They never got to bed until two or three o'clock in the morning.

## II

It was in the Café du Dôme that one afternoon Pancho made the acquaintance of Carlos Valerga. He was coming from the *lavabo* and as he passed the telephones he heard him speaking in Spanish. He thought that he might be a countryman of his, and so, waiting until he put down the receiver, he introduced himself. The fact that Carlos was a Guatemalan made little difference. Pancho invited him to have a drink.

"I am here with a friend," said Carlos, "but I am sure he also will be happy to join you."

"Bring him along by all means. I'm not alone either. I've got my wife with me."

"I shall be delighted to meet her," said Carlos.

His friend's name was Jan Hübert. He was a tall, thin man, with a cadaverous face and long, untidy hair. His clothes were ragged and none too clean. He was plainly very poor.



## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

"Jan has just come from Berlin," explained Carlos. "He is also an artist."

Pancho was delighted. He led them both over to the little marble-topped table where Anabelle was sitting, and he introduced them to her as though he had known them for years. Then he shouted to the *garçon*.

They sat there drinking and talking until it was time to go to dinner, and then Pancho suggested:

"Let us all dine together this evening."

Jan and Carlos thought it an excellent idea. Anabelle would have preferred to dine alone with Pancho, but she said:

"That will be very nice indeed."

She could not remember ever having seen Pancho so happy. He was, in fact, thinking of the parties he used to give in his studio in San Francisco. The dinner was very good, and he insisted on ordering champagne. After the second glass Carlos and he began to talk in Spanish, which neither Anabelle nor Jan could understand. But Jan was really too busy eating to take an interest in the conversation. Anabelle thought he must be starved. When the dinner was finished

## AN ARTIST PASSES

Pancho insisted on paying the bill. From the restaurant they all went to the Select. They stayed there until three in the morning, and again it was Pancho who paid. Rather, it was Anabelle. After an afternoon and evening in their company she was rather bored with his friends. They both got very drunk and then they became extremely vulgar. But Pancho, who was very drunk also, enjoyed himself hugely. When he said good-night he embraced first Carlos and then Jan, and he clapped them on the back and felt, really, that he had known them for years.

"It was a great evening," he told Anabelle, when at last they got to bed.

"I'm glad you're happy," she said. "Kiss me, my heart. Tell me that you love me."

But Pancho's head had already fallen back on the pillow. He was tight asleep.

## Chapter 2

### I

PANCHO and Carlos and Jan became inseparable. Every afternoon they met at the Café du Dôme. Pancho and Carlos drank beer and Jan cinzano. He was the most cultivated of the three, and he spoke about Vienna and Budapest and Berlin, where he had spent most of his time in the Romanisches Café. There is really little difference between the Romanisches Café opposite the Kaiser Wilhelm Gedächtniskirche and the Café du Dôme opposite the Café Rotonde. But, for that matter, there is little difference between Greenwich Village, Telegraph Hill—in the vicinity of which Pancho had his studio in San Francisco—and the *Quartier Latin*.

Jan frequently assured Pancho that he was the best friend he had ever had. Pancho liked him far better than Carlos, who was almost a countryman of his. Carlos was not an artist. Neither Jan nor Pancho quite understood what

## AN ARTIST PASSES

he was. He was, in fact, a leech living off wealthy, middle-aged American ladies, a pimp, and a number of other unpleasant things. He had been in Paris a long time and he knew all the popular American bars, and sporting houses and the various *locales* in Montmartre to which American tourists are taken to see the vice of Paris. Anabelle liked neither him nor Jan.

"I think they're both very low types," she told Pancho. "I can't understand what you see in them."

She felt rather bored sitting every afternoon with them in the Café du Dôme, every evening in the Select, more bored still taking them to dinner, as Pancho frequently insisted on doing.

"Besides, we always have to pay," she said. "I'm getting tired of it."

"They have no money," answered Pancho. "How can they pay? But if they bore you, stay away. Go to bed early. They don't bore me. I like them very much."

She could not help but see that he did not care whether she came along or not. He had really changed a great deal of late. Sometimes he was quite thoughtless and selfish. When she said any-

## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

thing that annoyed him—for his own good, of course—he became sullen and disrespectful. He got drunk every night, and, what hurt her most of all, he never made love to her any more unless she asked him to. It was horribly humiliating. She came to the conclusion that she had been too good to him. But when she refused to give him money he lost his temper and stormed about the apartment. And he got drunk just the same, for he could easily get credit. She suggested to him that he should settle down to work, but he shrugged his shoulders and said he wasn't in the mood. She cried often, and she blamed Jan and Carlos for her unhappiness. It always made Pancho angry when she cried. So she tried not to cry except when she was alone. That was frequently now, for she took his advice and remained away when he was with his friends. She did not yet admit to herself that her marriage was a failure. No woman, she felt, had ever loved a man as she loved Pancho.

"After all, he's only a boy," she told herself. "He's sowing his wild oats. I've got to be patient with him."

And, thinking of Freud, she tried to sublimate

## AN ARTIST PASSES

her unhappiness in her work. But she found it impossible. She decided she was too nervous and miserable to write.

## II

Pancho had never shown Jan and Carlos his paintings and his decorative Aztec and Maya designs, but as they were leaving the Select one morning at three o'clock he decided to do so.

They accompanied him home, and, since all three were boisterously drunk, they entered the apartment rather noisily, awaking Anabelle out of a sound sleep. She had not been feeling well and had gone to bed at about ten o'clock.

For a minute she thought they were burglars and she lay in bed trembling with terror. But then she recognized her husband's voice. She had no doubt that his companions were Jan and Carlos, and she wondered why he had brought them with him at that hour. Suddenly the door was opened and all three came in. As Pancho turned on the light Anabelle gave a little cry of surprise and indignation. She could see that



## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

Pancho was very drunk. He lurched forward and said thickly:

"I'm showing Jan and Carlos my things, and I want them to see that design over the bed. As you know, I think it's some of my best work."

He motioned to his friends to come closer so that they might see the design to better advantage. But Anabelle, recovering from her surprise, cried:

"How dare you come in like this? You and your drunken friends! Get out of here!"

Jan and Carlos felt very uncomfortable. They looked questioningly at Pancho, and Carlos said:

"I think we'd better go."

"Yes, go!" Anabelle was beside herself with anger and mortification. "Drunken loafers—that's what you are! All of you!"

Pancho's manner was sullen and defiant.

"Why all this fuss?" he demanded.

"Go!" she shrieked. "Go!" Burying her head in the pillow she began to sob hysterically.

Jan and Carlos had already left the room, and with a shrug Pancho followed them, slamming the door behind him.

## AN ARTIST PASSES

"I'm sorry," he said apologetically. "But you know how women are."

"That's quite all right," answered Carlos. "Good-night. See you tomorrow, old man."

When Jan and he had gone Pancho lighted a cigarette and walked about the living-room smoking it. He was very much annoyed and he cursed Anabelle under his breath. He ought to go in and give her a beating. But, all at once, he remembered the time he had beaten Lulu. The circumstances were similar. He had regretted that. If Anabelle were to leave him, he would regret it even more. He was not so drunk that he did not realize he couldn't get along without her—without her money, rather. He cursed her again. Tossing away the stub of the cigarette, he returned to the bedroom.

Anabelle heard the door open, but she did not look up. She continued to sob. Pancho regarded her sullenly. Then he started to get undressed. He really felt very tired. As he turned out the light and got into bed, Anabelle raised her head and said brokenly:

"To think that you could do a thing like this!

## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

Think of all I've done for you. Oh, I wish I were dead!"

She began to sob again. Pancho lay listening to her for a minute, and then he said:

"Please keep still. I am very tired and want to go to sleep."

"Why do you treat me like this? I haven't deserved it. Don't you love me at all any more?"

In his thoughts he told her to go to hell, but he answered:

"Of course I love you. You know very well I do."

He put his arms around her and kissed her. His breath was foul with drink. He kissed her again. Anabelle stopped sobbing. She lay in his arms, weak and trembling.

"You're thoughtless and selfish," she moaned. "But I love you. I can't help it. I love you. I love you!"

## *Chapter 3*

### I

COMING to the Café du Dôme one afternoon, Pancho found only Jan waiting for him.

"Where is Carlos?" he asked, as he sat down and called to the waiter.

"He told me to tell you that he had to go to see a friend," explained Jan.

Pancho shrugged his shoulders. "It's just as well. He's beginning to get on my nerves. I don't care if I never see him again."

Jan could see that he wasn't in a good humour.

"You must have had another quarrel with your wife," he said.

Pancho nodded gloomily. "You're quite right. I have never known a more trying woman. Why can't she let me do as I like? That's all I ask."

Jan sympathized with him. He did not like Anabelle. In the first place, because he knew she did not like him, in the second, because she was a woman. He disliked all women. He had been married three times, and his last wife, he often

## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

said, had nearly driven him to suicide. She had a small bakery in Berlin, and he had married her for much the same reason that Pancho had married Anabelle. But finally, deciding that even starvation was better than the daily tongue-lashing and the violent outbursts of temper he had to put up with, he had stolen enough money from her to come to Paris and had deserted her.

By four o'clock both had piles of saucers in front of them. Jan was looking around for the *garçon* to order another drink, when suddenly he saw a group of men walking along the Boulevard.

"They're friends of mine," he told Pancho. "I haven't seen them since I left Berlin. Shall I call them over?"

"By all means. Any friend of yours is a friend of mine."

Pancho had drunk enough to forget Anabelle and he was now in quite a cheerful mood.

## II

He liked Jan's friends very much. They had come from Berlin only a few days ago, and one

## AN ARTIST PASSES

of them told how after Jan had deserted her his wife had come to the Romanisches Café to find him. Pancho roared with laughter and banged on the marble-topped table with his fist. He swore that he had never in his life heard anything funnier.

"It wasn't really funny at all," said the man who had told the story. "She carried on in a dreadful way. I think she must have been very much in love with Jan."

"She had a strange way of showing her love, then." The waiter had hurried over when Pancho banged on the table, and Jan told him to bring another cinzano.

"No," said Pancho. "I'm sure you need something stronger. Let's all have a quetsch."

They had the quetsch, also a second and third. Pancho liked Jan's friends better and better. And, all at once, it occurred to him that he had never given a real party in Paris. It was high time that he did. He decided to give a party that very evening that would make all the parties he had given in San Francisco look like nothing at all. He banged on the table with his fist again.

"I invite you all to dinner," he cried, "and



## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

afterwards we'll paint the town red from Montparnasse to Montmartre."

The others gave the idea their enthusiastic approval. But suddenly Pancho realized that he had not enough money. He would have to return home first to get it from Anabelle. He moved closer to Jan and explained this to him. Jan grinned, and getting up Pancho said:

"You all wait here for me. I'll be back in fifteen minutes."

Jan's friends did not like his sudden departure very much, and they regarded uneasily the many saucers that were stacked up on the table. But Jan laughed at their fear that Pancho might forget to return.

"You don't know him," he said. "He's a prince. He's only gone home to make his wife come through. It's she who has the money, you know."

They were relieved to hear that and they joined in his laughter. The fifteen minutes passed. An hour passed. It began to get dark.

"It's beyond me," said Jan. "I just can't understand it."

"Well, I can," said the man who had told the

## AN ARTIST PASSES

story about his wife. "He's left us to pay the bill. He's a prince all right."

Calling to the *garçon*, he paid for the drinks he had had. So did the others. Then, telling Jan what they thought of him and his fine friend, they left.

Jan remained sitting at the table, frowning at Pancho's saucers and his own, which his friends had refused to pay for. He was aware that the *garçon* was watching him closely. But, though he didn't have so much as a franc in his pocket, he wasn't at all worried. Pancho was well known and his credit was good. He could think of only one explanation. Anabelle must have refused to give Pancho the money and he had been ashamed to come back. Women were all alike.

"Damn her!" he muttered savagely. "Damn them all!"

## III

There was a very good reason why Pancho had not returned to the Café du Dôme.

Entering the apartment house, he was told by the *concierge* that his wife was at home, also that

## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

she had a visitor—a gentleman, a friend of his. Pancho was very much surprised. He thought, from the description the *concierge* gave him, that the friend must be Carlos, and, wondering what he was doing there, he hurried up the stairs.

As he opened the door of the apartment, he was more surprised still to hear Anabelle shrieking for help. Rushing into the living-room, he found her struggling in Carlos's arms. He had her back against the wall and was kissing her passionately. It did not occur to Pancho that the situation was quite similar to the one in which he had once figured so prominently. At sight of him Anabelle shrieked again and fainted, and letting her fall to the floor Carlos wheeled about.

"You dog!" cried Pancho. "*Cabrón!* I shall kill you for this!"

He did not carry a knife these days, but he rushed at Carlos swinging his fists. Unfortunately he did not know how to box. Carlos did. He had acquired his knowledge of boxing in the Select and the other American bars that he frequented. He met Pancho's rush with a straight left and followed this up with a right cross that sent him reeling against the table. Seeing that

Pancho was groggy and helpless, he amused himself for a minute cutting him up pretty badly about the face. Then, since Anabelle had come to and was shrieking again, he finished the job with a vicious uppercut that stretched Pancho out on the floor, took his hat and departed.

When Pancho opened his eyes—one eye, rather, for the other was closed—he found Anabelle kneeling over him. She was still hysterical, and he cursed her weakly and told her to shut up. Every bone in his body seemed to ache, and his head reeled.

“A knife,” he muttered. “A knife. If only I had had a knife!”

Pulling herself together, Anabelle finally succeeded in getting him up from the floor, and leaning heavily on her arm he let her take him to the bathroom. Here she bathed his bruised face, and between her sobs told him what had taken place before he arrived at the apartment.

After leaving the restaurant where they had quarrelled that noon, she had gone shopping. Shopping, somehow, always made her feel better. Returning home at about four o’clock she had found Carlos waiting for her. She had no idea

## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

why he should want to see her, but he explained that he had something of the utmost importance to tell her and she asked him to come upstairs.

"He waited until we were alone together and then he said he felt he ought to tell me that you were unworthy of all I did for you. He said you were a drunkard and a liar and unfaithful to me. He advised me to get rid of you. 'It's easy to do that,' he said, 'since you have all the money.' I was furious and I told him to get out. And then suddenly he started to make love to me. I was terrified. I fought against him and shrieked for help. I don't know what would have happened if you hadn't come just then."

Pancho had no doubt as to what would have happened.

"If only I'd had a knife," he groaned.

Anabelle had finished washing the blood from his face. It was really in a terrible condition.

"Don't worry about it, my heart," she said. "We'll have him arrested for assaulting you."

Had she known the Paris police better, she would not have said that. Pancho did not know the police either, nor did he want to. He stopped thinking about Carlos. He was exhausted and

## AN ARTIST PASSES

miserable. There was a sharp pain in his side and he wondered whether a rib was broken. Once more Anabelle pulled herself together.

"Come along to bed now, my love," she said, "and I'll send for a doctor."

"Go to hell!" muttered Pancho.

She did not mind his rudeness. At that moment she could have forgiven him anything.

"My poor brave boy," she said. "Just to please me."

And she kissed his bruised cheek and his poor, swollen lips. Pancho was too weak to resist her. But he didn't want a doctor. He wanted a drink.



## *Chapter 4*

### I

PANCHO's rib wasn't fractured after all but it took him a fortnight to recover from the beating. Instead of going to the Select and the Café du Dôme he now went to the cafés in the neighbourhood of the Boulevard Saint Michel, where he was not so likely to meet any of the crowd that frequented Montparnasse. He was seldom without Anabelle. After her experience with Carlos she was terrified of remaining home alone.

"I'm only a woman," she said. "You can't blame me. I shall never forget it as long as I live."

That afternoon Pancho bought her a revolver. It is difficult in Paris to obtain a permit to carry a revolver, but there are numerous shops where, without a permit, you can buy not only firearms, but brass knuckles and blackjacks and sword canes, indeed every imaginable sort of weapon.

"I remember you told me once in San Cristo-

## AN ARTIST PASSES

bal that you knew how to shoot," he told Anabelle. "You need be afraid no longer now."

She took the revolver gingerly and put it away in the drawer of the night table. Then she gave him a kiss.

"It was sweet of you to get it," she said.

She did not think it quite so sweet when the very next day he did not keep a *rendezvous* he had with her. He was, in fact, very weary of her society. The marks of the beating had by now disappeared, but he had no doubt that Carlos had told the story of their fight both in the Select and the Café du Dôme, and so, much as he would have liked to, he did not go there. He went instead to the Café Balzar in the Rue des Écoles where, to excuse his cowardice, he told himself the beer was far better—it is, really—than anywhere in Montparnasse.

## II

It was getting dark when Pancho left the Balzar. He had some twenty *demis* under his belt and he was in excellent spirits. Turning off into the Boulevard Saint Michel, he sauntered along,

## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

his hands in his pockets, trying to make up his mind whether to have dinner by himself or to return to Anabelle.

And then, at the corner of the Place de Medicis, he ran into Jan. He had not seen him since that afternoon when he left him and his friends from Berlin sitting in the Café du Dôme. But he was very glad to see him now and he greeted him warmly. Jan was also pleased.

"Why haven't I seen you all this time?" he demanded.

Pancho frowned and shrugged his shoulders. "I suppose you know about the fight I had with Carlos. Until a few days ago I wasn't in any condition to be seen."

He called Carlos a vile name, accusing him of a certain unmentionable degeneracy. Jan was very sympathetic. He knew about the fight, of course. Carlos, he said, had told the story in every café in Montparnasse. Pancho frowned blackly. With twenty *demis* under his belt he wasn't afraid of the devil himself.

"I don't know how to use my fists," he muttered. "But if I'd had a knife——" He repeated the vile name, and added viciously:

## AN ARTIST PASSES

"If he doesn't look out, I'll knife him yet!"

He made a motion with his hand to show just how he would do it. But Jan took his arm.

"Forget about it," he advised. "Let's go somewhere and have a drink."

He was relieved that Pancho wasn't angry with him. It was the thought that he might be that had kept him from going to see him. He had become so accustomed to his generosity that he had had a hard time of it during the past fortnight.

"Sure we'll have a drink," said Pancho. "We'll have a lot of drinks. After all, you're quite right. I'd enjoy knifing Carlos, but he isn't worth the risk. I was nearly hanged once for killing a man."

And, arm in arm, they went into the Café Panthéon where, feeling the need of a strong drink after the twenty *demis*, Pancho ordered brandy.

## III

Leaving the Café Panthéon, Pancho and Jan wandered about stopping at every bar they came

## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

to. They were too busy drinking to think about dinner, let alone Anabelle. Midnight found them in the Rue Saint Jacques, not far from the Military Hospital. The church bells of the Quarter were tolling the hour, and they came to a stop underneath a street lamp and wondered where they should go next. They could not remember all the places where they had been, but they thought they must have visited every bar in the neighbourhood.

"To hell with Carlos!" cried Pancho suddenly. "I'm going to the Select."

Jan didn't like the idea at all. If Carlos were there—he probably would be—there might be trouble. All at once he remembered a little bar, only a few minutes away, where he had once been.

"Let's go there," he said. "It's a very amusing place. I'm sure you'll like it."

Pancho shrugged his shoulders good-naturedly. "All right. Let's go there first. The Select's dead, anyhow, until after two."

They found the bar without difficulty. It was a very small place and did not look very interesting. But they went in.

## AN ARTIST PASSES

The bar was empty save for a drunken man who was asleep in a corner.

"This is a hell of a place," said Pancho.

He did not like it any better after two *fines*, and he was about to suggest the Select again when he suddenly noticed a girl who had come in to speak with the bartender. She was not very good-looking, but she had a striking figure. French women, for the most part, have legs far too short for their bodies. He wondered why she should remind him of Lulu. He had not thought of Lulu for a long time. The girl, aware of his interest, smiled at him.

"You seem to have made a conquest," laughed Jan. "Let's buy her a drink."

The girl sat down with them at one of the tables, and Pancho insisted that she must drink a quetsch.

"It's the best drink in the world," he said.

He liked the way she smiled. Her lips were boldly painted and she sat with crossed legs and smoked one of his cigarettes. She was plainly a harlot. He no longer thought of the Select. He spoke to her in his very bad French. She knew,



## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

like most girls of her type in Paris, a few words of English. Her name was Charlotte.

"She reminds me of a girl I once had in San Francisco," he told Jan. "She had the most beautiful body I ever saw. I started to paint her as a modern *Xochiquetzal*, but one night when I was drunk I beat her and she left me. I never finished the painting."

"Maybe this girl could inspire you in the same way," suggested Jan.

Charlotte wanted to know what they were talking about, and Jan translated what Pancho had said. She was pleased. She put her arm around Pancho's neck and gave him a kiss.

"She wants you to go home with her," said Jan, amused.

Pancho nodded. He was very, very drunk, but his bloodshot eyes had a strange, inspired look. In his thoughts he saw the girl, naked and wonderful, as *Xochiquetzal*, the Goddess of Love and Flowers. And suddenly he got up.

"I'll go with her," he said.

Charlotte was delighted. He paid for the drinks they had had and gave Jan a hundred

AN ARTIST PASSES

francs. No thought of Anabelle entered his mind.

The girl's room was in a small hotel near-by. And Pancho was not disappointed. Her body was beautiful, more beautiful than Lulu's.

"I am an artist," he said. "Tomorrow I shall take you home with me. I want you as a model for a painting."

"But I've never been a model. I don't know how to pose."

"It does not matter," he told her. "I shall pay you well."

"All right. I'll pose for you, then. I like you very much, *chéri*."

Still inspired, Pancho took her in his arms and kissed her passionately.

## *Chapter 5*

### I

LYING in bed waiting for Pancho to come home, Anabelle had finally cried herself to sleep at about three o'clock in the morning. When she opened her eyes it was ten. For a minute, still half asleep, she did not remember the miserable night she had spent. She was always the first to awake, and she loved to snuggle close to Pancho and give him a good morning kiss. Like all Indian faces, his was rather sullen in sleep, but she thought it charming and childlike. Her hand moved caressingly to the place where he ought to have been lying, and suddenly she knew that she was alone in the bed. She started violently. Fully awake now, she realized that he hadn't come home. She sat up, trembling. Her head ached and she felt exhausted and ill.

Something must have happened to him. Perhaps he had been run over. Perhaps he had had another fight with that terrible Carlos. He might

## AN ARTIST PASSES

be lying in a hospital. He might be dead! The true explanation of his absence also occurred to her, but she refused to let herself even think of such a thing.

She sat on the bed, sobbing and terrified. What ought she to do? What could she do? Too nervous to remain still any longer, she threw off the bedclothes. She did not wear a nightgown. Lady writers in these modern days seldom do. She wore daintily embroidered pink silk pyjamas. Removing the beauty cream from her face, she attended to the bare necessities of her morning toilette, and hastily got dressed.

Then, with the help of the *concierge*, she telephoned the police; but there was no record of any man of Pancho's description. The *concierge*, who had thought it foolish to ring up the police and was of the opinion that Anabelle was making a great deal of unnecessary fuss, remarked in effect, "Boys will be boys, *Madame*. *Monsieur* will doubtless come home sometime during the day."

Anabelle was furious. Getting into a taxicab, she drove to the Select, where she found a *garçon* sweeping the floor. Resting on the broom he

## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

listened politely to her agitated questions. Yes, he knew her husband very well. But *Monsieur* had not been there for a long time. Yes, he was quite sure. So was another waiter who came up curious to know what the lady wanted. They did not say so, for French waiters are very polite, but Anabelle had an uncomfortable idea that they were of the same opinion as the *concierge*. She had to make a great effort not to burst into tears.

It was the same at the Coupole, the Café du Dôme and the Rotonde. No one had seen Pancho for a long, long time. She tried several other places along the Boulevard du Montparnasse, but finally she gave up the search. It was then noon, and getting into a cab in front of the Jungle she told the chauffeur to take her home. As the Citroën sped away, she thought again of what the *concierge* had said and her face flushed painfully. Despite herself, she was beginning to feel that, after all, this might be the explanation of Pancho's absence. She could control herself no longer. It was too much, too much. Taking out her handkerchief she had a good old fashioned cry.

## AN ARTIST PASSES

### II

She found Pancho in the apartment. She found also Charlotte posing for him in the nude. His back was turned to the door and he paid no attention to her. She stood in the doorway staring at him. She felt that she had never been so mortified in her life. Then mortification gave way to anger. She rushed up to him and pushed him away from the easel.

"You beast!" she cried. "You vile, contemptible beast!"

He was unshaved and his eyes were bloodshot from the night of debauch.

"Let me alone," he said. "Can't you see that I'm working?"

"You beast!" she repeated. "After all I've done for you. How dared you bring that wench here? This is my apartment. I won't stand for it. Do you hear me? I won't, I won't!"

"Oh, go to hell!"

Anabelle heard Charlotte snicker, and, utterly beside herself, she gave a cry of rage and pushing Pancho violently aside knocked over the easel.



## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

"Get out!" she shrieked. "This apartment and everything in it belongs to me. I'm through with you. You—you swine! Get out!"

She would have said a great deal more, but Pancho grasped her arm. He did not mind that she had called him a swine. But she had dared to throw his masterpiece, his beautiful painting of a modern *Xochiquetzal*, on the floor. He shook her until all the strength went out of her body. He cursed her both in Spanish and English. She had never seen him like this and she was terrified. His face was distorted with rage. He dragged her across the room out into the little hall. She was too frightened to move or speak. Opening the door he pushed her out of the apartment. A moment later the door slammed shut and she heard the key turning in the lock. She stood as though paralyzed. Then slowly, like a sleep-walker, she went downstairs. She could not think. She thought she was going to faint. But she didn't.

Presently she found herself out in the street. A taxicab passed by and she hailed it. She felt so weak that she could hardly get in. The chauffeur looked at her curiously.

"Where to, *Madame?*" he asked.

## AN ARTIST PASSES

She thought for a moment. Where to? What did it matter? She wanted to be alone somewhere, wanted to hide like a wounded animal. Suddenly she thought of the Jardin du Luxembourg. Yes, that would do. She told the chauffeur to take her there.

### III

It was a fine day and there were many people in the Jardin du Luxembourg. Anabelle, walking forlornly about, could find no spot where she could be alone with her grief. Because she felt tired and weak, she sat down on a bench near the pond, watching the toy boats and the children as they romped about, laughing and shouting at their play. Her lips quivered and tears welled up in her eyes. She had cried so much that day that they were red and swollen. She could not bear to sit there and contrast her misery with this happy scene. Getting up hastily, she walked away.

She thought disjointedly of Pancho and with her mind's eye saw him in her apartment painting that naked girl. A sob rose in her throat, but

## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

heroically she forced it back. She was grimly determined not to break down before all these people. As a matter of fact, no one paid any attention to her. Many people come every day to find solace in the Luxembourg Gardens, and a tear-stained face, because it is seen so often, is of no particular interest.

Anabelle wandered to the fountain of Marie de Medicis, and finding an empty chair sat down. She ought to have gone there in the first place, for there are few spots more suitable to an unhappy mood. She gazed mournfully at the marble lovers. Two pigeons were bathing in the little shallow pool at their feet. Ah, it might have been so different! She might have been that lovely marble figure resting her head on Pancho's knee. Instead, here she was locked out of her own apartment while he painted that girl—that harlot who had snickered at her. She could keep back the sobs no longer. She really felt that her heart was breaking. And what was she to do?

“How could he be so cruel,” she moaned, “when I loved him so!”

The pigeons had finished their bath and with a final splash they flew away. An old woman

## AN ARTIST PASSES

came to a stop in front of Anabelle and said:

"Forty centimes, please, for the chair *Madame* is sitting on."

Anabelle gave her the money, and when the woman had thanked her and gone away her eyes rested again on the fountain. Perhaps, tired of painting her, Pancho was at that moment making love to that brazen, naked girl. It did not occur to her that the girl was as beautifully formed as the marble figure in front of her. Hiding her face with her hands, she wept bitterly.

"O God!" she moaned. "What am I to do?"

## IV

That evening she returned to the apartment. The door wasn't locked and she found Pancho waiting for her. He made no effort to conceal his relief. He had been afraid that she wouldn't come back. He had gone too far in turning her out. He realized that. He begged her to forgive him.

"I was crazy," he told her. "I didn't know what I was doing. Say that you forgive me, *nena*."

## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

He started to embrace her, but she drew away. Suddenly, for the first time, she saw everything clearly. He did not love her. He had married her because of her money. It was because of her money that he was afraid of losing her now. She told him so, coldly, bitterly.

"Oh, my heart!" he cried. "How can you say such things? I love you. I love you very much!"

"It's no use," she answered. "I can never forgive you for what you did today. Never!"

Pancho was badly frightened. If she meant what she said, how was he going to finish his painting, his masterpiece? He sank to the floor and embraced her knees. He swore by all the Holy Saints that he loved her.

"Don't lie to me," she said. "If you love me why did you stay away all night? What about that girl you brought back with you?"

"I was crazy," he cried. "I've already told you. I was inspired. I didn't know what I was doing."

He implored Anabelle to look at the painting.

"It is good," he said. "It is the only good thing I've ever done. It is going to be what I've so often dreamed of—my *Xochiquetzal*."

## AN ARTIST PASSES

And as Anabelle turned reluctantly to look at it he added: "I am using the body of that girl, but the soul is yours, *nena*."

Anabelle saw at once that this painting was very different from anything Pancho had ever done. She did not understand it, but she knew it was good. It made her think of that marble figure of the Medicis fountain. And Pancho had said that the soul was hers. He had risen from his knees and he was kissing her passionately. She thought of that other figure of the fountain. Just so would he kiss were he made of flesh and blood instead of marble.

"Say that you forgive me, my heart! I love you, I love you!"

Anabelle made no answer, but she did not resist him. Her face was wet with tears and she was sobbing convulsively.

"All right," she said, at last. "I forgive you. But this is the last time."

"You'll never regret it, *nena*. I'll make you happy. I swear it by all the Holy Saints."

Picking her up in his arms he carried her into the bedroom and placed her on the bed. He



THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

waited until she was quite calm again, then he said:

“And you will let me finish the painting, my love?”

“You mean that girl?”

“Yes. I cannot finish it without her.”

Anabelle sighed. He had said the soul was hers.

“Yes,” she said. “Yes, you can finish it.”

## Chapter 6

### I

So for a week Pancho laboured at his painting. Charlotte came every morning at nine o'clock and stayed until it got dark. He had arranged with the *concierge* to have lunch brought up to the apartment, and he left it only to go to dinner with Anabelle. She had no fault to find with him. His conduct towards her was exemplary. He paid no attention to her at all while he was at work, but he more than made up for it in the evenings. As he held her in his arms and made love to her he closed his eyes and thought of her not as the stupid, middle-aged woman he had married for her money but as his finished *Xochiquetzal* come to life. In these moments of passion Anabelle was deliriously happy. She felt that all the misery she had gone through had been worth while.

She tried not to bother him while he was painting, and she spent a great deal of time in

## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

the Jardin du Luxembourg. It gave her pleasure now to watch the little toy ships sailing gaily across the pond, to hear the happy voices of the children as they romped about. She made the acquaintance of a little girl who came each morning with her *nounou* and brought her candy. And, sitting by the fountain of Marie de Medicis, she fed bits of bread to the gold fish. Every time she looked at the marble lovers she thought of Pancho and herself. It was not an easy life to be married to a genius, but it was a wonderful one. She was perfectly, beautifully content.

Returning to the apartment one evening, she found Charlotte still there. Pancho was standing in front of the easel and, as she entered the living-room, he rushed up to her, pointed to the canvas and cried:

"It is finished! My *Xochiquetzal*! See, my heart. Isn't it great? Isn't it a masterpiece?"

He pulled her over to the easel and she stood looking at the painting. It showed the naked white body of Charlotte against a background of weird colour, in which, after you looked a while, you could make out strange, misshapen figures,

## AN ARTIST PASSES

divine or obscene, you couldn't be sure, figures that, as you continued to look, seemed to come to life and move eerily about the naked body of the pagan goddess. Anabelle found it wonderful and terrible and vaguely troubling. She could not take her eyes away from it.

"The soul is mine," she told herself again and again. "The soul is mine. It is I who have inspired this."

She did not understand it, of course, and had she seen the painting in a gallery she would not have thought it such a masterpiece, for she was a rather stupid, superficial woman. But now she was profoundly moved. When she looked at Pancho there were tears in her eyes.

"My genius," she said, "kiss me."

Pancho did so. And, clinging to him, she cried:

"Oh, I love you! I am so proud and happy."

He liked her at that moment better than ever before, and he was even conscious of a sense of gratitude. But he did not love her at all. She was kind, but she was also old and ugly and stupid. He kissed her again and said:

"I am finished with Charlotte now. I still owe

## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

her two hundred francs. Can you let me have the money?"

"Of course, dear."

Anabelle opened her bag, but except for some small change she had nothing but a thousand franc note. Pancho took it from her.

"The *concierge* will be able to change it," he said. "I'll go downstairs with Charlotte. Be ready when I get back, *nena*. I'm very hungry and want to go to dinner."

Before Charlotte went out with Pancho Anabelle shook hands with her. She no longer hated her. She told Pancho to give her an extra hundred.

"She's deserved it," she said.

Then she had another look at the painting. She wanted Pancho to find her standing in front of it when he returned.

A half-hour later Pancho had not yet come back. Beginning to feel rather uneasy, Anabelle went downstairs and found the *concierge*.

"Have you seen my husband?" she asked.

The *concierge* nodded.

"*Oui, Madame*. I changed a thousand franc

## AN ARTIST PASSES

note for him and he went out with that girl who has been here every day. I saw them drive away in a taxicab."

Anabelle gave a violent start and her face turned white. But she kept a tight hold on herself.

"Thank you," she answered. "I—I think I understand."

Then, slowly, she returned to the apartment.

## II

Pancho had really intended to go back to Anabelle, but downstairs, while he was waiting for the *concierge* to change the money, he felt a sudden desire to go off with Charlotte and get drunk. He had given way to the impulse, and, sitting beside her now in the cab, he took her in his arms and kissed her. Charlotte was rather uneasy. She felt very sorry for Pancho's wife.

"I feel I'm doing wrong," she said. "Except for that first day she's been so good and kind."

Pancho shrugged his shoulders. "She is kind sometimes. That's why I married her. But I don't love her. Tonight, I'm in love with you."



## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

It was an open cab, and he pointed up at the heavens where the stars were beginning to come out. "I feel as though I could reach to the sky, *nena*. I'll pluck a handful of stars and put them in your lap."

He kissed her again, and after that Charlotte forgot Anabelle.

Pancho had told the chauffeur to take them to Montmartre.

"We'll begin there," he said, "and end up in Montparnasse. It's the best way in the world to get drunk."

Charlotte did not know Montmartre very well, but she was satisfied—satisfied merely to be with him.

"And do you really love me?" she asked.

He kissed her full on the mouth.

"Yes," he answered. "I love you. Tonight you are not Charlotte. You are *Xochiquetzal* come to life."

She did not understand him. And as she lay back in his arms she said:

"You talk as though you were crazy, *chéri*."

Pancho threw back his head and laughed at the stars. Venus was very bright that night, and he

## AN ARTIST PASSES

remembered that Anabelle had once told him it was the star of love.

"You are right," he cried. "I am a madman in love with *Xochiquetzal*! Isn't it wonderful?"

### III

That night and the following day and the night after that Pancho and Charlotte were drunk. When the thousand francs were gone he sold the watch and the diamond ring Anabelle had given him to some chance acquaintance in a bar. They lived in an alcoholic daze. Afterwards, they could remember neither where they had been nor what they had done. But they were both very happy.

Pancho awoke in Charlotte's room in the little hotel in the Rue Saint Jacques. He knew it was day because the window was bright with sunlight. Charlotte was still asleep. He wondered how long he had been drunk. Then he thought of Anabelle. She would be very angry, of course. He shrugged his shoulders. He did not want to go back to her. She was an ugly old woman. It would be far more pleasant to stay here with

## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

Charlotte. His lips touched her cheek and she awoke with a start.

"Where am I?" she asked.

"In your room. We've been very drunk, *nena*."

She smiled, still half asleep, and reached hungrily for him with her arms. He kissed her.

"We've had a wonderful time," he said. "But it's over now." And regretfully he added: "I'm going home to my wife."

## Chapter 7

### I

ENTERING the apartment Pancho called to Anabelle, and, receiving no answer, he went into the living-room. He gave a gasp. He dared not believe his eyes. The easel was lying on the floor, and beside it, face downward, the canvas. For full five minutes he stood in the doorway, staring at it. Then slowly, trembling like a leaf, he moved towards it and picked it up. He held it in his hands. It had been horribly mutilated. The lovely naked figure of *Xochiquetzal* had been slashed until it was unrecognizable. It was the same with the wondrous, weird background. His masterpiece was ruined. Sinking to the floor, still holding the mutilated canvas in his hands, he sobbed like a heartbroken child. He knew, of course, who had done this awful thing. Anabelle! Getting to his feet he shouted her name. He ran into the bedroom and, not finding her there, he

## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

cursed her and looked about wildly, furiously.

"Where are you?" he cried. "You've destroyed my *Xochiquetzal*! I shall kill you! I shall choke the life out of you with my hands!"

Then his eyes rested on the bathroom door. It was closed. He rushed forward and, turning the handle, found it locked. So she was hiding in there! He banged on the door with his fists, and yelled:

"Open it, or I'll break it in!"

When she still did not answer he took up a chair and beat at the panel. The wood cracked. He heard Anabelle, her voice shrill with terror, crying to him to stop, but he paid no heed. He wielded the chair in a mad fury until, at last, the door crashed in under the assault.

He found Anabelle cringing against the wall in back of the bathtub. She was holding the revolver he had bought her to her heart. She was beside herself with fear.

"I am going to kill myself!" she cried. She repeated this several times, and then began to shriek hysterically.

Pancho went slowly towards her. It seemed to her that he had suddenly become too large for his

clothes. His shoulders had fallen forward till his coat wrinkled and pulled away from his wrists. He seemed all arms. His dark face, unshaven and dirty, looked savage, inhuman, it seemed to her. Her terror was so great now that she stopped shrieking. He was mad. She was certain of it. He was going to murder her. With a sudden, desperate strength, she sprang away from the wall, and at the same time she found her voice again.

"You're mad!" she shrieked. "If you touch me I shall shoot. I mean it. So help me God!"

She pointed the revolver at him. She was quite right. He was mad—mad with grief and rage. He did not care at that moment whether he lived or died.

As he rushed at her Anabelle fired, but the bullet went wild and lodged in the wall. She had no chance to fire again. He had grasped her. She knew that she was fighting for her life. Terror gave her strength. Silently, desperately, she struggled with him for possession of the revolver. Pancho could not remember afterwards just what happened. There was another shot. He did



## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

not know who pulled the trigger. But there she lay on the floor. Blood was staining her pink silk pyjamas. And, bending over her, he saw that she was dead.

Pancho was quite sane now. He drew away from the body and backed slowly to the door. There was fear written on his face, and horror, and surprise—and let us hope that there was also regret. He had not meant to kill her. In his passion he had said so, but he would only have given her a beating. Perhaps she had killed herself. But it made no difference. She was dead and they would accuse him of the crime. He remembered how he had nearly been hanged once. And suddenly he heard voices demanding to know what had happened. The shots had been heard, of course. The *concierge* was opening the door of the apartment. They would find him there. Perhaps the *concierge* had already called in the police. He ran into the bedroom and locked the door giving on the hall. He was only just in time. He looked wildly about the room. They were knocking on the bedroom door now. In a few minutes they would get it open. He would

## AN ARTIST PASSES

have to make his escape right away. He remembered that he didn't have a sou left. Anabelle's bag was lying on the table, and he opened it and found a roll of bills which he put in his pocket. Then he went to the window—he thanked the *buen Dios* that the apartment was in the first story—and looked out. There was no one in sight. Climbing out quickly he let himself drop to the sidewalk. The fall stunned him for a second, and as he got to his feet he heard someone shouting from a window. But he did not stop to look. He ran along the street and a few moments later disappeared around a corner.

## II

Charlotte was still in bed when Pancho returned to her mean little room in the hotel in the Rue Saint Jacques. She could see the moment he entered that something terrible had happened. Locking the door, he came and sat on the bed and told her what it was. He was so frightened and he spoke so incoherently that she had a hard time understanding him.

## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

"I've come to you," he told her, "because I have no one else to turn to. I can't think. I'm going mad! What shall I do? What can I do?"

Breaking down completely, he let his head fall on her knees and sobbed. She tried to calm him. She promised to help him in any way she could.

"The best thing for you to do," she said, "is to get away from Paris. Have you any money, *chéri*?"

Pancho took out the money he had taken from Anabelle's bag and gave it to her. She counted it and it came to not quite eight hundred francs.

"It is all I have," he said.

For the first time he thought of Anabelle's jewellery. What a fool he had been not to take that also!

"I am lost!" he moaned. "I might as well give myself up!"

Charlotte thought for a minute, and then said:

"Listen, *chéri*. I think I can help you. Before coming to Paris I worked in Marseilles in a bar

## AN ARTIST PASSES

near the water front. I'll give you a letter to the man who owns the bar and he may be able to get you on board a ship. What do you say?"

Pancho felt hope returning. He was beside himself with gratitude. He told her he had worked on board a ship once before. The experience he had had would surely help him now.

"When does the next train go to Marseilles?" he asked.

"I don't know. I'll get dressed and find out. Meanwhile, you had better remain here in the room."

"Thank you," he said. "Thank you, *nena*. But why are you doing all this for me?"

Her hand was resting on his shoulder. She moved it to his bowed head and lightly caressed his tousled black hair.

"I don't know, *chéri*. I think because I love you."

She felt his arm tighten about her. It was true. She loved him. She lay back and let him kiss her. Then, gently, she pushed him away. Her heart cried out to her to keep him there. But

## THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

she knew it was useless. French women are the most practical in the world.

“There is no time for love now,” she said.

Getting out of bed she began hastily to get dressed.

## *Chapter 8*

### I

PIERRE GOUDARD finished reading the letter. He remembered Charlotte very well. A pretty little thing to whom many a sailor had lost his heart. And she wanted him to get this fellow away from France. He had committed a murder in Paris. Well, it was not the first time old Goudard had helped a murderer to escape. He looked thoughtfully at Pancho. A Mexican, the letter had said. An artist who had made a painting of her. He wiped his large red hands on the apron he wore and spat on the sawdust-covered floor. He asked Pancho how much money he had, and Pancho took from his pocket all he had left. Old Goudard counted it with a shrug. The average sailor, back from a voyage, spent that much of an evening. But he thought again of Charlotte. He had really been very fond of her.

"I'll see what I can do," he said.

Pancho thanked him. He was a miserable,



derelict figure and his manner was fearful and cringing. He reminded old Goudard of a whipped dog.

"Where do you want to go?" he asked.

Pancho licked his dry lips. "I want to go home. I was born in a village called San Cristobal. I want to go back there."

"I've never heard of such a place."

"It's not far from Manzanillo," explained Pancho.

Old Goudard shrugged his shoulders again. But he promised to do his best, gave Pancho a drink and told him to sit down and wait.

The bar was a popular one, and that night it was crowded with seafaring men. Pancho, never taking his eyes off old Goudard, saw him speaking with a man in a blue uniform, evidently a ship's officer. They seemed to reach an understanding, and presently old Goudard came over to Pancho and said:

"You're in luck. That man I was speaking to is the chief engineer of the *Ivona*. You're sailing tomorrow morning for Colon."

Pancho drew a deep breath. "And what am I to do on board?"

## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

Old Goudard explained that he was to go as a stoker. Pancho gave a gasp of dismay.

"Either take it or leave it," said old Goudard disgustedly. "But you'll find the journey to Devil's Island far more unpleasant."

He turned away, but Pancho followed him and grasped his arm.

"I'll go," he said.

## II

So, for the second time in his life, Pancho went to sea as a stoker. It was even worse than he expected. He had grown fat and soft and, having been accustomed to a temperate climate, he couldn't bear the heat. He was very seasick. He felt convinced that he would never get to Colon. He would die on the way, and that would be the end of Pancho Ortega, the artist. He felt very sorry for himself. He had not deserved such a fate. But, remembering how he had been mistreated that time on the *Faralone*, he continued to tend his furnace, though every bone in his sweating body ached and his head reeled and his eyes burned like coals in his dark face.

## AN ARTIST PASSES

His fears, however, were groundless. The French are a sympathetic race. He found his fellow stokers far different from those who had made his life such a hell on board the *Faralone*. They did not despise him because he was a Mexican, and they pitied him because he was soft and fat and sick. When at the end of his first shift he had dragged himself to the forecastle no one kicked him and called him a "yellow greaser." Instead, one of the men came over to him and said:

"You don't belong in the stokehole, my friend. You are not fit for that sort of work."

Pancho agreed with him. "I know. I am convinced I shall die before we get to Colon."

"What were you before you became a stoker?" continued the man.

"I was an artist."

The man was very much interested.

"I don't believe it," said one of the others.

They called upon Pancho to prove that he was really an artist.

"All right," he said wearily. "Give me a pencil and a sheet of paper."

Someone brought them to him, and he made a

## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

sketch of the man who had first spoken to him.

"It does look like Jean," said a tall, broad-shouldered young Breton who had the furnace next to Pancho's. "Make one of me now."

Pancho made half a dozen sketches, and the men chuckled over them and clapped him on the back. The young Breton gave him his pipe to smoke. Someone brought out a guitar. And, forgetting his misery in the excitement of his success, Pancho, no longer seasick, smoked the pipe and joined in the singing. He was really quite happy.

The following day the whole ship knew that one of the stokers was an artist. The sketches Pancho had made were passed about, and that evening, as they were having dinner together, the chief engineer showed them to the captain.

"They're good, aren't they?" he said. And with a grin he added: "The fellow is an artist all right, but he's the worst stoker I ever saw."

Captain Bellon agreed that the sketches were good. He had a soft spot in his heart for all artists. In his youth he had wanted to be one himself, but his father had forced him to go to sea.

## AN ARTIST PASSES

"I want to have a talk with this man," he said.

When Pancho was told that the captain wanted to see him he was very much surprised. So were the others in the forecastle. They were more surprised still when, as a result of the talk, the captain took Pancho out of the stokehole.

"I dare say he's nothing but a rascal," he said, when he explained his action to the chief engineer. "But he's an artist and I feel sorry for him. I guess we can find something for him to do on deck."

Pancho had told him a pitiful story—how he had starved in the *Quartier Latin*, and how, suddenly, a great yearning had come over him to return to the village of San Cristobal where he was born, where life was simple and kind. Here, he said fervently, he felt he could work in peace. Of course, he did not mention the murder of Anabelle. Captain Bellon doubted that the story was altogether true. But he could not help liking Pancho. In fact, he not only took him out of the stokehole, but he promised when they reached Colon to help him to get to Manzanillo.

Pancho found life on board the *Ivona* very

## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

pleasant now. He did little work, but mostly he sat on a capstan or lay on the deck and lazily gazed at the sky and the sea. He was popular with everyone, and he made many sketches. Also, he thought a great deal about his home-coming after all these years. It would be pleasant to see his mother and brother and sister-in-law again. He remembered how he used to stand at Maria's window and sing to her.

"A lazy rascal, if there ever was one," said the captain. "But I like the fellow."

And when the *Ivona* docked in Colon he kept his word. He spoke to a friend he had there. And presently Pancho found himself on another steamer which two weeks later landed him in Manzanillo.

## *Chapter 9*

### I

It was evening when Pancho arrived at San Cristobal—a fine evening, bright with moonlight and starlight.

He found his brother Felipe sitting in front of the house smoking a cigarette. Felipe did not notice him coming along the road and he looked up with a start as he heard his name.

“I have come home,” said Pancho simply.

They embraced, and then Felipe gave him a cigarette and they sat side by side, smoking. Inside the house, Pancho’s mother and Engracia were clearing away after the evening meal.

“They are both well,” said Felipe. “Engracia has had a baby since you went away.”

Pancho was delighted and congratulated him.

“And are you still working at the mine?” he asked.

Felipe explained that the mine was now abandoned. There had been a revolution some years



ago—Pancho remembered that Anabelle had told him about it—and the house where Don Roy used to live had been destroyed. Felipe sighed, thinking of the good old days before the revolution.

“And Maria?” asked Pancho—“how is it with her?”

“Her husband was killed in the revolution,” said Felipe. “She is a widow and has two children.”

But Engracia and Pancho’s mother had heard Felipe speaking with someone and they came out to see who it was. Recognizing Pancho, they cried out with amazement. He embraced them both. Then he remembered that all day he had had nothing to eat.

“I shall warm something for you,” said his mother.

While he was eating his fill of *frijoles* and *tortillas* Pancho thought of Maria. So Jacinto had been killed and she was now a widow!

“And what have you been doing all these years?” asked his mother.

“It is a long story,” he answered. “I am too tired to tell it to you now.”

## THE PASSING OF AN ARTIST

He had a sudden desire to see Maria, to stand at her window and sing to her.

"Has old Lizarraga the tavern still?" he asked.

Felipe nodded. Pancho was glad to learn that.

"I'm not only tired but also thirsty," he said.

"I think I'll call on him and get a glass of tequila."

His mother smiled. It was just like old times. Felipe started to go with him, but he changed his mind. He worked in the fields now and he was very tired.

"That's quite all right," said Pancho. "I'll be home early."

## II

Old Lizarraga was pleased to see him. He grinned from ear to ear, mentioned the Mexican equivalent of the bad penny that always turns up, and poured him out a drink.

"Maria was speaking about you only the other day," he said. "Why don't you go to see her?" And proudly he added: "She is the mother of two children now, a boy and a girl."

Felipe, Pancho explained, had already told

## AN ARTIST PASSES

him that. He had another tequila, and then, having embraced Lizarraga, he went out and walked through the moonlight to the window where he had stood so many times in the past. Maria wasn't there. He smiled, as an inspiration came to him. Leaning against the old adobe wall, he looked dreamily up at the moon and sang. . . .

*"Yo tengo una casita,  
Una casita . . ."*

THE END



92-8326237











GETTY CENTER LIBRARY



3 3125 00603 1393

